Federal court rules in favor of Xerox in case against IPI. PAGE 3
Several electronic items stolen in WSR school burglary. PAGE 5

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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 28

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WITH NO TOURISM AND REVENUE

180 govt employees terminated

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A total of 180 government employees who are currently furloughed will be permanently terminated from their jobs due to the continued lack of tourists and a depressed CNMI economy.

See 180 on Page 4

'Filipinos in dire need of consular services'

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

On behalf of Filipino workers in the CNMI, an official of the Marianas Association of Filipino Engineers and Architects has appealed to the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and the Philippine Consulate General in Agana, Guam, to resume consular services for Filipinos in the

See SERVICES on Page 4

WITH MILLIONS IN FEDERAL FUNDS FOR DISASTER RECOVERY

Torres cites need for local companies to beef up construction force

» Guam construction companies are welcome as there's a lot of projects
» 'Adding PH back to H-2B visa program a big success'

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

With millions of dollars in federal funds that the CNMI is receiving, there is a need for more construction workers, and Guam companies are welcome to assist in completing many projects not

See TORRES on Page 4

New schedules for COVID-19 vaccination

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The COVID-19 vaccination schedule has changed, effective Feb. 8, and part of those changes is that the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. will no longer be administering the first vaccine doses on the weekends.

Vaccination hours have been extended from 8am to

See COVID-19 on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 9, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,649	24	7,673
Recovered	7,416	35	7,451
Active	68	24	92
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			119,113

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	0	133
Traced via Travel Screening	107	0	107
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			174

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI
Saipan: 12,267
Tinian: 141
Rota: 353

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
Red: Least safe
Orange
Yellow
Blue
Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

PARENT LEADERS

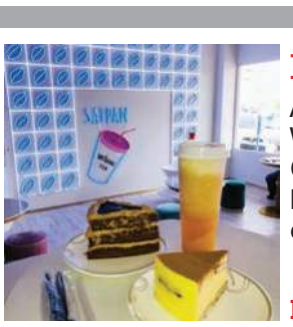
An array of banners that were put up yesterday morning along a stretch of Beach Road recognizes parents who were nominated by different schools on the island as "DYS Parent Leaders" in honor of the 17th CNMI Parent Leadership Month. In relation to this, the Division of Youth Services is inviting the community to a proclamation signing ceremony at the Kagman Community Center this Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, at 11am.

NEIL FAMA

INSIDE

SUPPLEMENT
Today's issue comes with a pullout supplement on the upcoming Valentine's Day.

PAGE 11



BUSINESS
At newly opened Wink Tea & Cake in Garapan, you can have your cake and eat it too.

PAGE 15

LIFE & STYLE
Authorities are investigating the appearance of a mysterious monolith in southeastern Turkey.

PAGE 19

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

GMS Falcons bag top places in NJSDA

Most of Green Meadow School's representatives at the islandwide pre-regional meet of the National Junior Speech and Debate Association bagged top places in various speech events.

GMS students from 6th-8th grade took four first-place finishes in the competition, which was held in January.

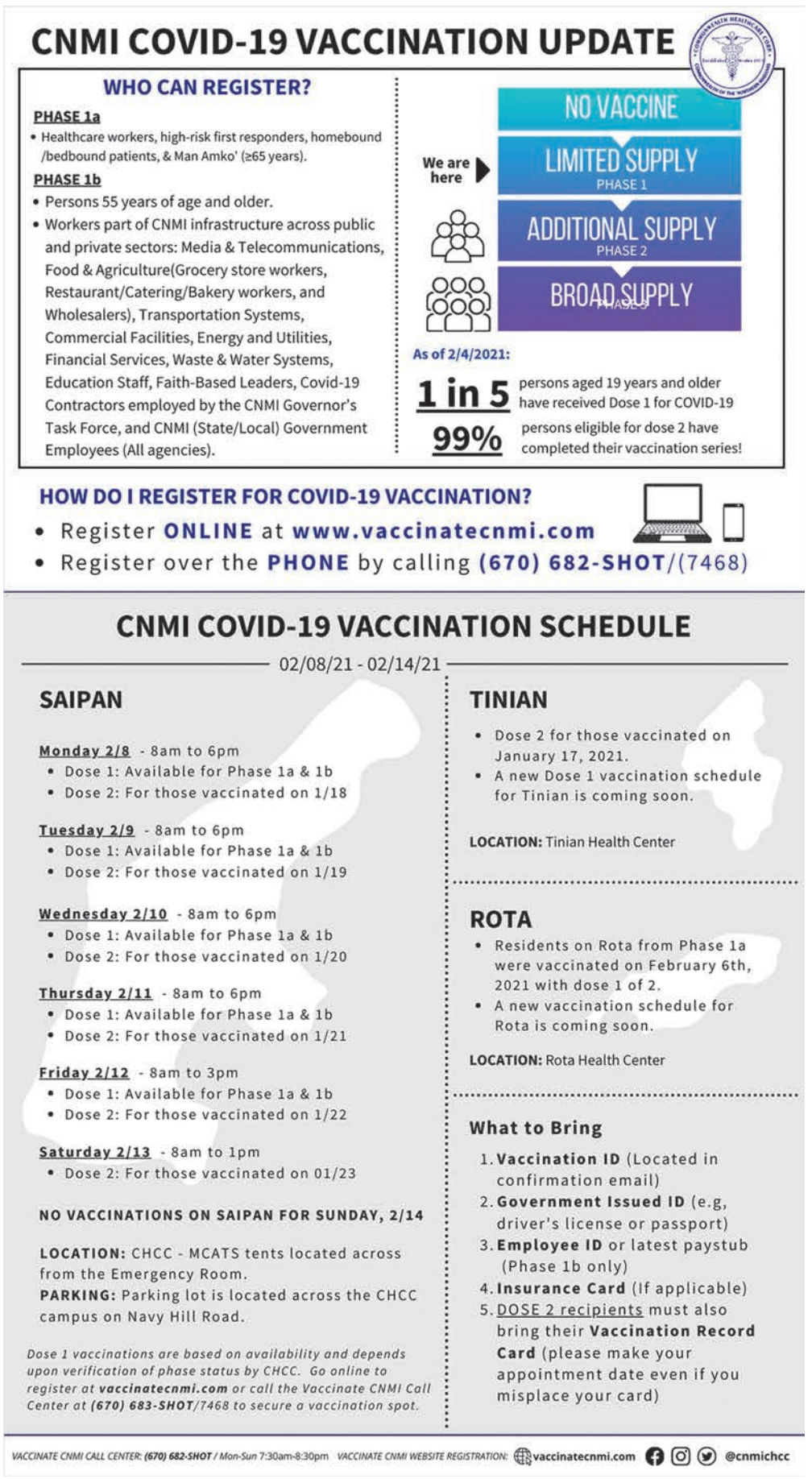
To adhere to COVID-19 protocols, this school year's NJSDA competition was altered in the way the students presented their pieces. Interpretation events were pre-recorded, while other events such as Impromptu and Extemporaneous Speaking remained as live events. All events were judged remotely, with the judges evaluating the performances via the Zoom application.

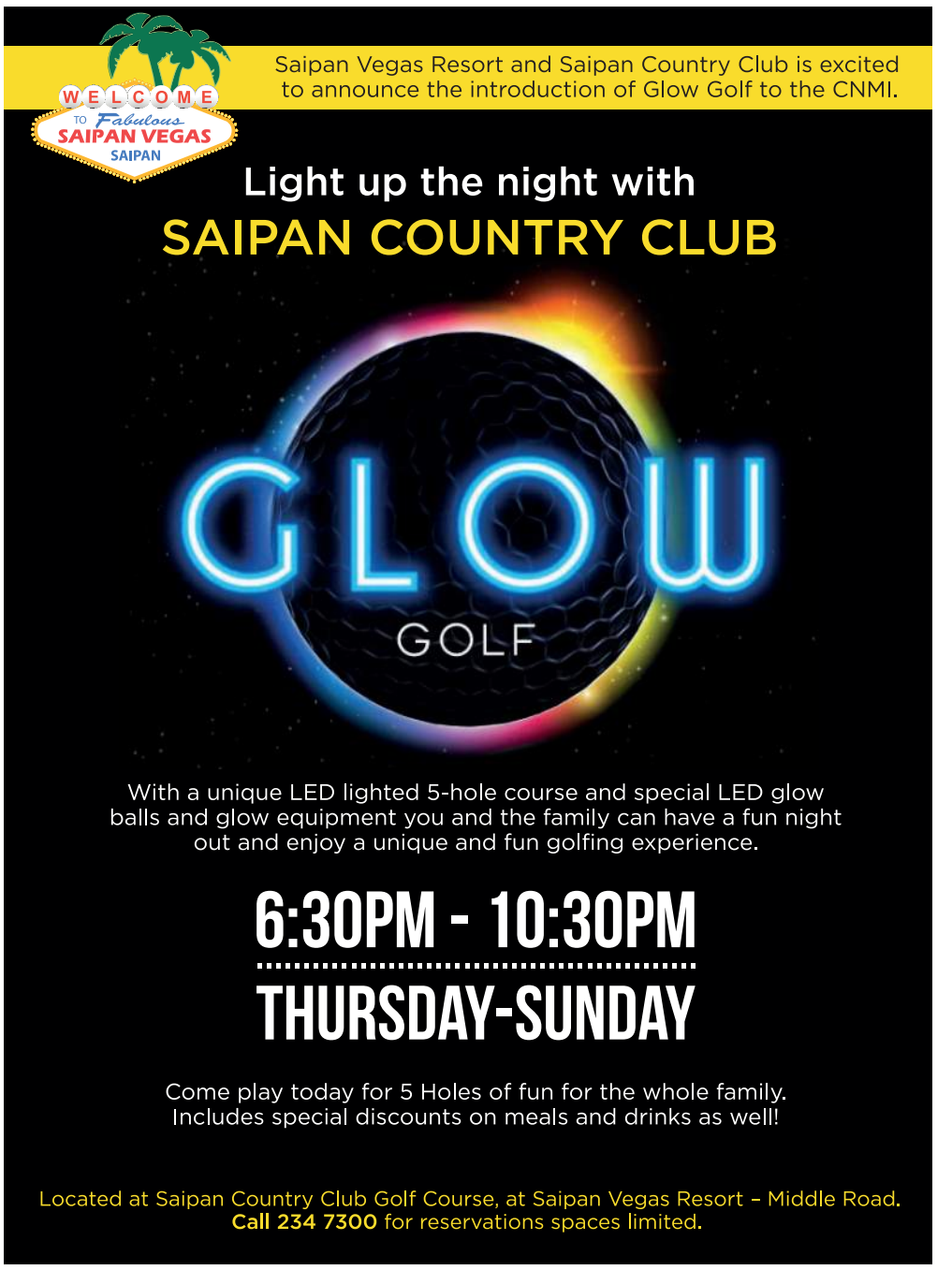
Green Meadow School's representatives at the islandwide pre-regional meet of the National Junior Speech and Debate Association pose with teachers, school officials, and school principal Milagros Songcuan, leftmost.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

School principal Milagros Songcuan praised the students as well as their parents for their untiring support of the school and its students.

WINNERS' LIST

- Tristhony Duarte: 1st place in Poetry, 2nd place in Dramatic Interpretation
- Tristan Yanto: 1st place in Prose, 3rd place in Poetry
- Andres Antonio Antonino: 2nd place in Humorous Interpretation, 2nd place in Poetry
- Elesha Louise Manansala: 2nd place in Impromptu B, 3rd place in Declamation
- Paula Bernardo: 3rd place in Impromptu B
- John Edsel Hinolan: 1st place in Declamation, 3rd place in Impromptu A
- Ezra Kristen Alfred: 4th place in Dramatic Interpretation
- Yel Khalil Ocampo: 4th place in Poetry, 5th place in Impromptu A
- Chealzka Navarro: 1st place in Impromptu A, 2nd place in Declamation. ***(PR)***


CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE
WHO CAN REGISTER?
PHASE 1a
• Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound /bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).
PHASE 1b
• Persons 55 years of age and older.
• Workers part of CNMI infrastructure across public and private sectors: Media & Telecommunications, Food & Agriculture(Grocery store workers, Restaurant/Catering/Bakery workers, and Wholesalers), Transportation Systems, Commercial Facilities, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Waste & Water Systems, Education Staff, Faith-Based Leaders, Covid-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force, and CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies).
NO VACCINE
We are here
LIMITED SUPPLY
PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY
PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY
As of 2/4/2021:
1 in 5 persons aged 19 years and older have received Dose 1 for COVID-19
99% persons eligible for dose 2 have completed their vaccination series!
HOW DO I REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION?
• Register ONLINE at www.vaccinatecnmi.com
• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE
02/08/21 - 02/14/21
SAIPAN
Monday 2/8 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/18
Tuesday 2/9 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/19
Wednesday 2/10 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/20
Thursday 2/11 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/21
Friday 2/12 - 8am to 3pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/22
Saturday 2/13 - 8am to 1pm
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 01/23
NO VACCINATIONS ON SAIPAN FOR SUNDAY, 2/14
LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.
TINIAN
• Dose 2 for those vaccinated on January 17, 2021.
• A new Dose 1 vaccination schedule for Tinian is coming soon.
LOCATION: Tinian Health Center
ROTA
• Residents on Rota from Phase 1a were vaccinated on February 6th, 2021 with dose 1 of 2.
• A new vaccination schedule for Rota is coming soon.
LOCATION: Rota Health Center
What to Bring
1. Vaccination ID (Located in confirmation email)
2. Government Issued ID (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. Employee ID or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. Insurance Card (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their Vaccination Record Card (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)
Dose 1 vaccinations are based on availability and depends upon verification of phase status by CHCC. Go online to register at vaccinatecnmi.com or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at (670) 683-SHOT/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.
VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: (670) 682-SHOT / Mon-Sun 7:30am-8:30pm VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE REGISTRATION: vaccinatecnmi.com @cnmichcc


WELCOME TO Fabulous SAIPAN VEGAS SAIPAN
Saipan Vegas Resort and Saipan Country Club is excited to announce the introduction of Glow Golf to the CNMI.
Light up the night with
SAIPAN COUNTRY CLUB
GLOW
GOLF
With a unique LED lighted 5-hole course and special LED glow balls and glow equipment you and the family can have a fun night out and enjoy a unique and fun golfing experience.
6:30PM - 10:30PM
THURSDAY-SUNDAY
Come play today for 5 Holes of fun for the whole family.
Includes special discounts on meals and drinks as well!
Located at Saipan Country Club Golf Course, at Saipan Vegas Resort – Middle Road.
Call 234 7300 for reservations spaces limited.

Federal court rules in favor of Xerox in case against IPI

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has ruled in favor of Xerox Corp. in its lawsuit against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and has granted its request to enter a default judgement against the casino operator.

Following a hearing yesterday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona granted judgment in favor of Xerox for over $180,000. The court also granted Xerox's attorney's fees and costs.

In addition, IPI was also ordered to immediately surrender the Xerox machines that Xerox provided them.

David Banes, who represents Xerox, was ordered to calculate the total amount IPI owes them, which would include prejudgment interest.

Xerox asked the court to enter a default judgment against IPI last week for failing to respond to its lawsuit within the time allowed.

Banes asked the court to issue an order awarding them $182,905.88 for damages plus late charges and interest.

In Banes' declaration filed with the request for entry of default, he said IPI was served with the summons and complaint on Dec. 31, 2020, but IPI has not served a responsive pleading nor filed a motion within the time provided by the federal rules of civil procedure.

Xerox filed the lawsuit with the U.S. District Court for the NMI against IPI on Dec. 23, 2020, for allegedly not paying for services rendered and equipment it rented. Xerox sued IPI for breach of contract, unjust enrichment, and quantum meruit. The lawsuit demanded the return of the devices and related equipment rented to IPI, and attorney's fees and costs.

According to court documents, Xerox entered into a services master agreement with IPI on Feb. 26, 2016.

GCAMUN holds first mock conference

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Island Model United Nations, along with Grace Christian Academy Model United Nations, held their first mock MUN conference last Friday, Feb. 5, in preparation for the first official regional NMIMUN conference on March 1 and 2 that will have the students participating in a debate to solve global issues following United Nations' procedures.

According to NMIMUN president Eileen No, who is a student at Saipan International School, the NMIMUN's first mock conference topic was capital punishment, and this will help participating students prepare for the competition next month.

The NMIMUN will have another mock conference today, Feb. 10, at the Saipan International School, similar to the one they had last Friday.

MUN first started in the CNMI three years ago. The SIS MUN group then went around the island in mid-2020 to spread and teach Model United Nations to both middle and high schools, including GCA, Mount Carmel School, Marianas High School, Seventh-Day Adventist, Green Meadow School, Northern Marianas International School, and Saipan Community School.

The group hopes to educate all CNMI schools of MUN procedure and the skills required to participate in the islandwide competition this March 1 and 2. According to No, GCA has been one of the strong leading schools participating in MUN.

According to No, GCA-MUN adviser Grace Duran introduced MUN to the GCA students in hopes of providing the students a global perspective and necessary skills such as research and public speaking.

MUN is an educational organization that creates globalism and gives students a chance to gain further knowledge about different countries' political and economic policies. This is a global educational organization that attracts representative students from all around the world and is recognized for its ability to enhance students' teamwork and debate skills, and it is also definitely one of the well-known extracurricular activities colleges think highly of.

In MUN, the students act as representatives of countries around the world and participate in a debate to solve global issues following United Nations' procedures.

When GCA students asked why they joined the GCA-MUN, sophomore Anthony Deleon Guerrero said he wants to gain personal confidence in himself, so that he can have a better time talking to new people. "I think of MUN is giving us an idea of what we can expect in the real world and prepare us to come up with solutions," he said.

GCA freshman Akira Ota said she wants to be better at public speaking and be more confident in front of people.

Sofia Gomez, a 6th grader, said that while MUN was scary at first, it turned out to be much more fun because of all the activities they do in class.

There are 11 other MUN teams around the island with over 120 students preparing to participate in the first official regional NMIMUN conference in March.

The students that joined the Grace Christian Academy Model United Nation pose after their first mock MUN conference last Friday, Feb. 5, in preparation for the first official regional Northern Mariana Islands MUN conference on March 1 and 2.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Celebrating Valentine's Day as a family

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

ADVERTISING Feature

Valentine's Day is not only about romance but could also be used to teach the younger generation the importance of caring and treating others with kindness.

"When we have disagreements and it so happens our children are around, Mike and I turn our switches on and become intentional about what we want to say and we think how we should say it that would not upset any of us and the children. This Valentine's Day, we tell our children that we love them even more and why so that they understand. Children nowadays are smart. The more they understand things and feelings, the better equipped they are when they grow up, become adults, and eventually find a spouse."

—Karen Benavente, San Jose

"There is a saying that your sons and daughters will love other people with the love and respect they see from their parents while growing up, right? Our children are 2, 4, and 7 years old and we make them see how Linda and I are bonded, how we talk to each other and how affectionate we are. We say I love you to them directly but we also want our actions to show tha."

—Eric Adriano, Garapan

"I am a stay-at-home mom and I felt that more during the pandemic. My son, Jack, turned 4 last year and being with him 24/7 was a challenge but I love it. Part of our activity that started last year was baking together. I picked up baking due to quarantine and Jack would see me watch videos and mix ingredients in a bowl. Slowly I taught him how to do it with me. This Valentine's Day, he told me wants to bake a vanilla cake for his Dad and asked me if he can help. My heart felt a pinch of happiness because this gave me a different meaning about Valentine's Day."

—Vannie Garcia, Navy Hill

"My husband and I order a lot of stuff online. For me, I get a lot of clothes but for every new clothing I get, I take one old clothing from the cabinet and put it in a 'Karidat' bag until it gets filled. Once filled, we donate it. My daughter watches me do this whole process and picked up something from it. She knows it is for other people that do not have things that we have. Last Christmas, she got tons of new toys and she put some old toys in a bag to give away. Our Valentine's weekend will be busy trying to see what else we can put in the bag and my daughter is leading us."

—Betty Reyes, Sadog Tasi

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IT&E

180

From Page 1

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres informed the Legislature yesterday that he and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios are making a very difficult decision to initiate the reduction-in-force procedures as part of ongoing cost-containment measures to ensure the continuity of public services.

"I have no choice when we don't have any tourism and revenue," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

Torres said this is why he and the administration have been pushing for a travel bubble between Saipan and Korea since last August, then last December, and last month as a means to at least have a partial resumption of tourism.

Torres

In his letter to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (R-Saipan) yesterday, Torres said that rehiring the 180 furloughed employees would require $5,688,239 for fiscal year 2021, which the government doesn't have

This, Torres said, is in addition to the 3% shortfall in anticipated revenue incurred during the first quarter of fiscal year 2021.

He said he and Palacios decided to go ahead with the reduction-in-force after consulting with the Civil Service Commission, the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Commonwealth's executive department heads and analyzing the ongoing fiscal impact of the loss of tourism and the administration's financial projections for the rest of the fiscal year.

"The dire fiscal circumstances facing the CNMI have forced us to take this regrettable, but necessary step," he said.

Torres said the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 has resulted in a "dramatic and severe reduction" in economic activity and tax revenue. He said the pandemic and measures to control it resulted in suspended flights, which in turn, caused the tourism industry to come to a complete standstill. As a consequence, the governor said, the CNMI's tourism-based economy became depressed and tax revenue was thus drastically reduced.

After reducing the fiscal year 2020 budget by 48% due to the shutdown of the tourism markets, the government furloughed civil service employees and terminated excepted service employees. About 516 government employees in total were laid off, with approximately 269 of that number being furloughed civil service employees.

"This was done in order to ensure basic services remained operational during the ongoing public health emergency," Torres said.

At that time, Torres said, the administration had hoped that the COVID-19 threat would pass within a year and that tourism would resume and that the economy would revive.

Torres lauded the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and the COVID-19 Task Force for successfully keeping the community safe from COVID-129, yet the CNMI's economy remains down because of the inactive tourism industry, resulting in further decline of government revenue.

The infusion of federal funding from the CARES Act and other federal grants allowed the administration to place laid-off government employees—including about 89 civil service employees—from the furlough list into federally-funded positions and other positions important to the COVID-19 response operation.

Torres said their goal was to maximize federal funding in order to accommodate as many furloughed employees as they could, and that they are grateful that they were able to do so given the circumstances and limited resources.

"Unfortunately, even with reprogramming and maximization of all available financial resources, we have not been able to bring back 180 government employees from the furlough list," he said.

The governor noted that the current fiscal year 2021 budget appropriation does not provide sufficient funds to recall these furloughed employees.

Despite initiatives pursued to increase economic activity such as the travel bubble with South Korea to resume tourism and increased federal funding through such programs as the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Relief, it is doubtful that they will have enough revenue to increase the fiscal year 2021 budget and be able to recall the furloughed employees in the next few months, he said.

"Due to the unlikelihood that the economy will revive sufficiently within the next few months so that revenue will increase to the point that the government can recall all furloughed employees, the administration deems it necessary to initiate the reduction-in-force procedures," Torres said.

The administration has directed all executive branch departments and activity heads that currently have furloughed civil service employees to immediately submit a notice of intention to implement a reduction-in-force form to the Office of Personnel Management in compliance with the NMI Administrative Code.

The administration has also directed Executive Branch departments and activity heads to cooperate with OPM to implement the reduction-in-force procedures.

Torres said the significance of the CNMI's tourism industry on the economic wellbeing of the community and the proper financing of the services the community expects from its government have been made very clear in this crisis.

He said that in 2019, the CNMI received on average 30,000 tourists a month—approximately 30% of the resident population—with each one spending between $400 to $758 a day.

Torres said the elimination of tourist arrivals during this crisis devastated businesses who rely on this market.

"While federal assistance aids in mitigating the further loss of consumer activity, it will not replace the role of tourism in supporting economic activity and government revenue," he said.

Torres said he will continue to take action to protect the islands, ensure that the government provides its public services, rebuild the economy through tourism promotion, and pursue federal relief to assist the residents.

He said his administration continues to work with the Marianas Visitors Authority and South Korea travel partners to fully implement the travel bubble, which would allow a partial resumption of tourism under strict COVID-19 mitigation guidance, and generate needed revenue.

Torres pointed out that this, however, will not be enough to make up for the shortfall.

He said the estimate is that in order for the CNMI to generate the necessary resources from the tourism industry to support these employees, they would need more than 130,000 tourist arrivals in the remaining months of this fiscal year.

For this reason, the governor underscored the need for the Legislature to pass legislation that promote revenue generation and business development in order to aid in the collective efforts to increase government revenue and hopefully bring back all employees.

TORRES

From Page 1

only Saipan, but also on Tinian and Rota, according to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last Friday.

Speaking at a radio news briefing, Torres said the CNMI does not have enough construction and skilled workers so they have been advocating this to the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and even to Washington, D.C. for the last several years, specifically since Super Typhoon Soudelor and Super Typhoon Yutu on Saipan and Tinian and Typhoon Mangkhut on Rota.

"I'm happy that that they… allowed us to have 2,000 construction workers for recovery on Yutu," he said.

One of their biggest success was putting back the Philippines on the list of countries eligible to participate in the H-2B visa program. That effectively allowed the CNMI to hire construction workers from the Philippines. "That is a great help," Torres said.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security reinstated the Philippines on its list of countries allowed to participate in the H-2B visa program, soon after Torres appealed to DHS to allow the reinstatement.

In the request, the governor cited the CNMI's "severe" demand for Filipino construction workers as the economy needs more workers to develop and rebuild the community after a series of disasters.

With that, Torres said Friday that they look forward to local construction companies here beefing up their manpower because of the $240 million that's been allotted for disaster relief programs.

Torres said the CNMI also has a couple of hundred million dollars on public assistance.

Torres said they're also getting more funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Office of Insular Affairs. He said there's several other programs that are coming in such as the $11.2 million for rehabilitation of Garapan roads.

"So we hope that in the next several months leading up to year, to a year and a half, [there will be] more construction workers and companies around. We welcome companies from Guam to come in and assist," the governor said.

Torres said the CNMI needs the construction workforce so they're working with the Northern Marianas Trades Institute to also prioritize construction.

Because of the pandemic and other disasters like Yutu, Torres said they've been working on making sure that the goals and the visions of NMTI fit what they need in the CNMI, to give opportunities to local residents.

SERVICES

From Page 1

CNMI who are in dire need of its services.

Carlito Marquez, who is a MAFEA secretary and is a known worker advocate in the CNMI, said that Filipino workers' annual employment in the CNMI is contingent on their passport—and its validity—thus the need to have their passports kept valid so that they could renew their work contracts.

Marquez said that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CNMI has not received consular services for the entirety of 2020, and Filipino workers in the CNMI are in dire need of the assistance that only the Philippine Consulate General in Guam can provide.

"A lot of us here [on] Saipan [have] expired passports, or expiring passports that need to be renewed. We renew our [employment permits] on a yearly basis. We [also] need some other pertinent documents related to our employment," he said.

Marquez said he and his fellow Filipino workers understand the limitations set in place due to COVID-19, but it is their hope that the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila will allow the Philippine Consulate General Office in Guam to prioritize consular services on Saipan this year.

"It is very unfortunate that due to COVID-19 for the whole year of 2020, no consular visit from Guam took place [on] Saipan. We need your consular services here in Northern Mariana Island," he added.

Although the CNMI has an honorary Philippine consul, Glicerio Arago, his office does not have the authority to renew passports or provide other consular services like renewal of Overseas Workers Welfare Administration membership, affidavits, and others. Without a valid passport, Filipino workers are unable to renew their employment permits.

Back in 2012, due to budgetary constraints, the Philippine Consulate General on Saipan closed its doors to the public, leaving Filipino workers in the CNMI dependent on the consular outreach services provided by the Philippine Consulate General in Agana, Guam.

Filipinos with CNMI-only work permit cannot travel to Guam, while other Filipino workers are unable to travel because of travel restrictions.

COVID-19

From Page 1

6pm, Monday through Thursday, and 8am to 3pm on Friday. The previous vaccination times ended at 4pm Monday through Friday and 8am-4pm on Saturday and 9am-1pm on Sunday.

CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña said the extended hours will provide a flexible schedule that will help those who need to work around their job. "By extending the hours, we are also making sure that individuals that want to get vaccinated, that it is their turn, that they can come a certain time. …We are also focusing on essential workers, and we want to make sure they have the ability, or the option, to come at a later time outside their working time," said Muña.

Muña

She also said that CHCC will no longer be administering the COVID-19 vaccination over the weekend, unless they are due for their second dose. The COVID-19 vaccines are a two-shot regimen, with the second shot administered at either 21 days (Pfixer vaccine) or 28 days (Moderna) after the first shot.

As for CNMI-Only Transitional Workers and government workers who wish to get vaccinated, Muña said they must provide their identification card and employee tag/paycheck stub to show CHCC who they work for.

Foreign workers whose visas have expired have to wait until the phases have expanded to the public. "Because we're prioritizing essential infrastructure employees now, we need an ID and proof they work for that infrastructure. Now if their visas have expired, we're not opening that group yet," said Muña, adding that if they are 55 years old and older, they will fall into the general population and only an ID will be OK.

Several electronic items stolen in WSR school burglary

The William S. Reyes Elementary School in Chalan Kanoa was burglarized last Feb. 6, 2021, Saturday, and several flat-screen televisions were stolen, as well as a school projector and a BOSE brand speaker.

According to a Department of Public Safety news release, DPS received the 911 call last Friday, Feb. 8, 2021, at about 8:04am, reporting the burglary and theft incident.

At the scene, police officers met with one of WSR's staff members who was reviewing the school's surveillance cameras, which showed an unknown individual on the camera recording. According to the timestamp of the camera the suspect was seen at about 2:29am on Feb. 6, 2021, wearing short pants, a T-shirt, and covering their face with a piece of cloth.

Further investigation revealed that the suspect broke into one classroom that is also connected to another classroom. The second classroom was left in a state of disarray. After a quick inventory of the second classroom, items missing include several flat-screen televisions with remote controls, a school projector, and a BOSE brand speaker.

DPS would like to remind the public to be diligent when purchasing electronics from unknown individuals.

This case remains ongoing, if you have any information on the incident about this incident or if you have any knowledge of the whereabouts of the missing items, call 911. If you wish to remain anonymous call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. ***(PR)***

New law loosens rules to avail of agricultural homesteads on Pagan

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has signed into law a bill that removes the requirement for persons to have lived in the Northern Islands in order to avail of agricultural homesteads lots that the Department of Public Lands has made available on Pagan.

Torres informed House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) last Friday that he has enacted House Bill 21-43. The new law amends the eligibility requirement for people who wish to avail of DPL's village and agricultural homesteading programs. The bill, which was passed by the House and the Senate of the 21st Legislature, now becomes Public Law 21-44.

Introduced by Rep. Joel C. Camacho (R-Saipan) in April 2019, the House passed the bill with amendments in August 2019. The Senate passed the bill with amendments in February 2020 and it was returned to the House. The House rejected the Senate amendments and the bill was sent to a bicameral conference committee. Both chambers adopted the bicameral conference committee's report and the bill was passed on Dec. 22, 2020.

Under the act, a homestead applicant for Pagan must be registered to vote in the Northern Islands elections prior to applying and must either reside or have resided in the Northern Islands as indicated in a valid birth certificate or court document. Priority shall be granted to those born on or who are descendants of someone born in the Northern Islands.

In an earlier interview, Camacho said the conferees unanimously agreed to include the repeal and re-enact language to remove any perceptions of discrimination but yet prioritize those born in the Northern Islands or a descendant of such persons.

Camacho said that, by inserting the language, the applicant can still avail of such homestead if they were residents or residing in the Northern Islands or born in the Northern Islands or are descendants of such individuals.

He said even if an applicant does meet those requirements, he/she must be a registered voter in the Northern Islands elections prior to applying.

DPL Secretary Marianne Concepcion-Teregeyo informed the Legislature last December that DPL has made available 88 agricultural homestead lots on Pagan since 2017, but no one has been eligible because of the law's one-year residency requirement.

Blanco will introduce tax relief bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House minority bloc leader Rep. Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan) intends to pre-file a bill that gives tax relief to disaster-stricken CNMI taxpayers by granting them relief from penalties and interest on unpaid taxes.

Blanco said yesterday that he is already done writing the bill and that he will pre-file it this morning, Wednesday.

In an interview last week, Blanco said the government gives tax relief on penalties and interest for business people who have hard time paying off their taxes each time there is a typhoon or every disaster.

"We just went through [Super Typhoon] Yutu. There was no tax break. Now we went through this pandemic, yet there's no tax break," Blanco said.

Although there's some financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, he said he is not sure if that's enough.

He said his bill will propose to allow a waiver on tax penalties and interest. It will apply to all tax years prior to the 2020 calendar year. Blanco said this will encourage people who have not filed their taxes to pay their taxes and not worry about penalties and the interest.

"The window to pay is 60 days," he said.

Blanco said there are certain businesses that they would like to look at who may not qualify for this.

He said the details will come out once he pre-files the bill most probably this week.

According to a draft of the bill obtained by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, persons who are not entitled to immunity are any person against whom a criminal or civil action has been initiated and is pending for any violation of the tax laws of the CNMI or any person being investigated for fraud.

Also not covered by the immunity are any person who has been convicted of tax fraud, whose source of income is illegal, and who fraudulently files a special return under this bill.

The bill, unlike the United States that allows deduction for disaster/casualty losses, is not seeking revenue or income deduction. The bill only seeks the relief of penalties, and to a certain extent on interest charges on the tax principal paid within the specified time period.

The legislation states that the waiver of interest will promote collection of taxes as providing such waiver will likely put taxpayers in a better position to commit to rebuilding and as a result accelerate economic growth.

Saipan Tribune will publish other details in the bill once the legislation is filed.

DCRM
SUMMER
INTERNSHIP
COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
The Division of Coastal Resources Management is looking for 15 CNMI-based college students or college-bound high school graduates with an interest in learning more about coral reef and coastal zone management. Our summer interns work 20 hours a week for 10 weeks from June to August and are paid $10.00 per hour.
To be considered, please submit the following documents by email to outreach@dcrm.gov.mp
CNMI EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION
Which can be found at www.cnmiopm.net
COVER LETTER
RESUME/CV
TRANSCRIPTS
Official or Unofficial
TWO (2) LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
Instructors and/or Employers Only
POLICE CLEARANCE
Within the Last 3 Months
COPY OF VALID PHOTO ID
Driver's License, Passport, etc.
APPLY BY FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021
This summer's internship opportunities include:
MARINE MONITORING ◦ EDUCATION & OUTREACH
SHORELINE MONITORING ◦ SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT ◦ REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ◦ WATERSHED MANAGEMENT
For more information, contact DCRM at
664-8300 or visit our website at WWW.DCRM.GOV.MP

Webinar: Understanding changes to new relief package

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the CNMI Small Business Development Center, is hosting a free webinar, "Understanding the Changes to the US Congress New Relief Package," on Thursday, Feb. 11 at 10am via Zoom.

The event includes a presentation from Ken Lujan, branch manager of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Guam Office, regarding changes to SBA's Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Additionally, there will be information shared from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce about the changes to the Employee Retention Tax Credit Program.

This event is free and open to the first 100 registrants at tinyurl.com/SCCFeb11Webinar. A link to the webinar will be emailed after registration.

For more information or to learn how to become a Chamber member, visit online at www.saipanchamber.com, call 234-7150, or visit the fourth floor of the Marianas Business Plaza (Room 413). ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
2390 Beach Road, Oleai CDA Bldg., Unit 205, P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. Nos: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245 • Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS 2021-CDA-04-IFB

CLOSING DATE: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 • TIME: 10:00 am

"JANITORIAL and LAWN CARE SERVICES"

Copies of the proposal package may be picked up at the 2390 Beach Road Oleai, CDA Bldg., Unit 205, Saipan during regular working hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays, and on our website.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reject any and all bids and proposals in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a bid in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
Executive Director

/s/ **FRANCISCO C. AGUON**
Acting Director, Procurement & Supply

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

NMHC to talk about CDBG-DR Housing Programs on Tinian

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. is sending its CDBG-DR Loans Team to Tinian on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021, to conduct a presentation and Q&A session on the CDBG-DR Housing Programs. The event is scheduled for 1pm at the Natibu Park Antonio M. Borja Amphitheater in order to comply with COVID-19 protocols on social distancing.

The three NMHC CDBG-DR Housing Programs include: New Construction for Homeownership Opportunity and First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program; Homebuyer Program; and Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program.

Prequalification applications may be picked up and completed at the Tinian Field Office or accessed via the NMHC CDBG-DR website at: www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

For more information, contact NMHC CDBG-DR Division at 233-9447/9448/9449/9450 or via email cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmh-cgov.net. ***(PR)***

Soroptimist NMI Chapter meeting set

The Soroptimist Chapter of the Northern Mariana Islands will hold its monthly luncheon meeting on Thursday, Feb. 11 at 12pm, at the Majesty Restaurant on Beach Road.

The chapter is open for new members, and if you have a heart for the women of the CNMI, join us! ***(PR)***

Guam Soil and Water Conservation District Board meeting set

The Northern Soil and Water Conservation District Board will hold its regular February monthly virtual meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021, on a Zoom Link. Email board chair Hope A. Cristobal (hcristobalmom@gmail.com) for the Zoom link information, special accommodations, and agenda. ***(PR)***

CHamoru commission meeting set

The Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru yan i Fina'nå'guen i Historia yan i Lina'la' i Taotao Tåno' (Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam) will hold its second February monthly virtual meeting on Feb. 18, 2021, Thursday, from 12:30pm to 3:30pm on a Zoom Link. Email kumisión board secretary Rosa Salas Palomo for Zoom link information, special accommodations, and agenda at (kailee.rosapalomo@gmail.com) and/or administrator AnnMarie B. Acreo at (sainaguinifi@gmail.com). ***(PR)***

CHARITY R. HODSON (F0487)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607 CK Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615 | Facsimile: (670) 234-5749
charity@chodsonlaw.com
Attorney for Petitioner Manuel R. Ogarto

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

THE ESTATE OF EDWIN SIMEON R. OGARTO, Deceased.	Civil Action No. 21-0022-CV **NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS** Date: Thursday, March 4, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE EDWIN SIMEON R. OGARTO, OR HIS ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Manuel R. Ogarto has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of Edwin Simeon R. Ogarto, the deceased. The attorney for Petitioner is Charity R. Hodson, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 502607, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to **CHARITY R. HODSON**, Attorney at Law, at the address above indicated.

Dated this 5th day of February, 2021

/s/Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

CHARITY R. HODSON (F0487)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 502607 CK Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-1615 | Facsimile: (670) 234-5749
charity@chodsonlaw.com
Attorney for Petitioner Manuel R. Ogarto

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

THE ESTATE OF MARIANA RABAULIMAN OGARTO	Civil Action No. 21-0023-CV **NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS** Date: Thursday, March 4, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE MARIANA RABAULIMAN OGARTO, OR HER ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Manuel R. Ogarto has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of Mariana Rabauliman Ogarto, the deceased. The attorney for Petitioner is Charity R. Hodson, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 502607, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or her Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to **CHARITY R. HODSON**, Attorney at Law, at the address above indicated.

Dated this 5th day of February, 2021.

/s/Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE MATTER OF TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS FOR MATT SUN (d.o.b. 10/4/2019), minor child. **By: JI YI, Petitioner.**	**FCD CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0016** **ORDER SETTING HEARING AND PRESCRIBING NOTICE REGARDING PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Ms. Ji Yi ("**Ms. Yi**"), petitioned to this Court for a decree granting her sole parental rights for Matt Sun, a male child born in the Commonwealth Healthcare Center on October 4, 2019 ("**Minor Child**"), and terminating the parental rights of Mr. Weixue Sun, the biological father of the Minor Child.

A hearing on the Petition for Termination of Parental Rights is hereby set for March 26, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. in the CNMI Superior Court before Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio. Any interested party may appear at that hearing.

Ms. Yi shall publish notice of the March 26, 2021 hearing once at least one week before the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Petitioner shall also post notice on the Saipan Courthouse Public Notice Board for a period of at least ten consecutive (10) calendar days before the set hearing date.

IT IS SO ORDERED, this 9th day of February, 2021.

HONORABLE TERESA KIM-TENORIO
Associate Judge

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Gao, Julie Marie S. Petitioner, vs. Gao, Feng Respondent,	FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0337 **SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 503236 CK Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950, It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2020.

/s/ Clerk of Court

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Accountant – DW2021-01
Saipan, CNMI

Accountant, D & W SAIPAN, INC., Saipan, CNMI

Overall in-charge on the accounting and administrative operation of the company. Report to the management regarding the finances of the company. Prepare and analyze accounting records, financial statements, or other financial report to assess accuracy, completeness and in conformity to reporting and procedural US GAAP standards. Analyze business operations, trends, cost, revenue, financial commitments, and obligation to project future revenues and expenses. Compute the taxes owed and prepare tax returns such as CNMI business gross revenue tax, CNMI Quarterly Withholding, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return (941-SS) and Corporate Income Tax Return (1120-CM), ensuring compliance with payment, reporting or other requirements.

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Business, Accounting, Finance, or related field, foreign educational equivalent accepted, plus 12 months experience in general accounting functions. Able to supervise accounting and administrative staff.

Salary: $ 14.85/hour

Workplace: CHALAN PALE ARNOLD MIDDLE ROAD, HIGHWAY EXPRESS BUILDING Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to D & W Saipan, Inc., PO BOX 500440, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to dwsaipan@pticom.com Job Number **– DW2021-01**

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

Chief Accountant: Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (may be foreign equivalent). Acts as primary support to the Finance Director in the financial administration of the Company's policies and procedures. Responsible for maintaining in full integrity of the company's financial statements including but not limited to Balance Sheets, Profit and Loss Statements and Cash Flow Statements. 60-months experience as Accountant or Chief Accountant.

Send resume to: Interpacific Resort Saipan Corp., dba Pacific Island Club Saipan, Attn: Human Resources, P.O. Box 502370, Saipan, MP 96950.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is sending its CDBG-DR Loans Team down to Tinian on Thursday, February 11, 2021, to conduct a presentation and Q&A session on the CDBG-DR Housing Programs. The event is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. at the Tinian Library.

The three (3) NMHC CDBG-DR Housing Programs include:

1. New Construction for Homeownership Opportunity and First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program;
2. Homebuyer Program; and
3. Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program.

Prequalification applications may be picked up and completed at the Tinian Field Office or accessed via the NMHC CDBG-DR website at: www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

For more information, please contact NMHC CDBG-DR Division at Tel. Nos. 233-9447/9448/9449/9450 or via email cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on ***Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 8am*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (01/27/2021)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
- A. CHCC Opioid Response Team – (Dateline for Public Comments Jan 6, but still accepting)
  - 1. SB 21 – Medical Assistance – Drug Related Overdose – Prosecution for Possession
  - 2. SB 21 - Good Samaritan Act (Amendment)
  - 3. SB 21 – CNMI Drug Overdose Policy (Opioid Overdose Reversal Medication)

VII. Director's Report
- A. CHCC Opioid Response Team – Public Comments
  - 1. Meeting with House Legislative Committee on Health and Welfare
  - 2. Financial Report Update
  - 3. FSMB 2021 House of Delegates Virtual Meeting – Voting Delegate Request - Dateline to Submit: February 26, 2021

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
- A. Governor's Office
  - 1. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Call
- B. Legislature

X. Old Business
- A. Proposed Regulations with Amendments – Dr. Glenda George
  - ➢ § 140-50.3-4700 – Psychology
  - ➢ § 140-50.3-4900 – Substance Abuse

XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
- A. New Application
  - 1. Andrew Bertagnolli – Telehealth Clinical Psychology
- B. Renewal Applications

XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
- A. Next Meeting Date
- B. Adjournment of Meeting

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-017

CNMI STREETLIGHT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlight luminaires to promote energy and cost saving measures on the power distribution system in Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United states Department of the Interior (USDOIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-21-017, CNMI Streetlight Efficiency Project)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 4, 2021** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 10, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Power Division Engineer via email adrian.reyes@cucgov.org; Alfred Palattao, CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-018

RELOCATION OF UTILITIES AT ROAD (A-F) AND ROUTE 205/206 TINIAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general relocation of gate valves, water meters, waterlines, fire hydrant assembly and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Defense (USDOD). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USDOD.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **February 2, 2021 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-018, *Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 Tinian*"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 25, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 09, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician, Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-015

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE WATER & WASTEWATER CERTIFIED OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms for Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program for the islands Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project is funded by the US Department of Interior-Office of Insular Affairs.

Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$100.00** for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-21-015, Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program"* to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on February 19, 2021**. Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Proposal shall be submitted on the provided Proposal Forms. Proposals will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal under the contract. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Request for Proposals should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the Proposer, awarded a contract.

This Request for Proposals does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract(s) is contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Board of Director's approval. The contract(s) will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 29, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address-manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Vivian Santos, Human Resources Manager via email-Vivian.santos@cucgov.org; Francisco Matsunaga, HR Generalist, via email francisco.matsunaga@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Senior Administrative Support Technician via email- marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-010

A&E Design Services for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Upgrade (S19-068)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Design Services of the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade in Agingan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAES-21-010, A&E Design Services for Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 11, 2021. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 22, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Westen Knudsen, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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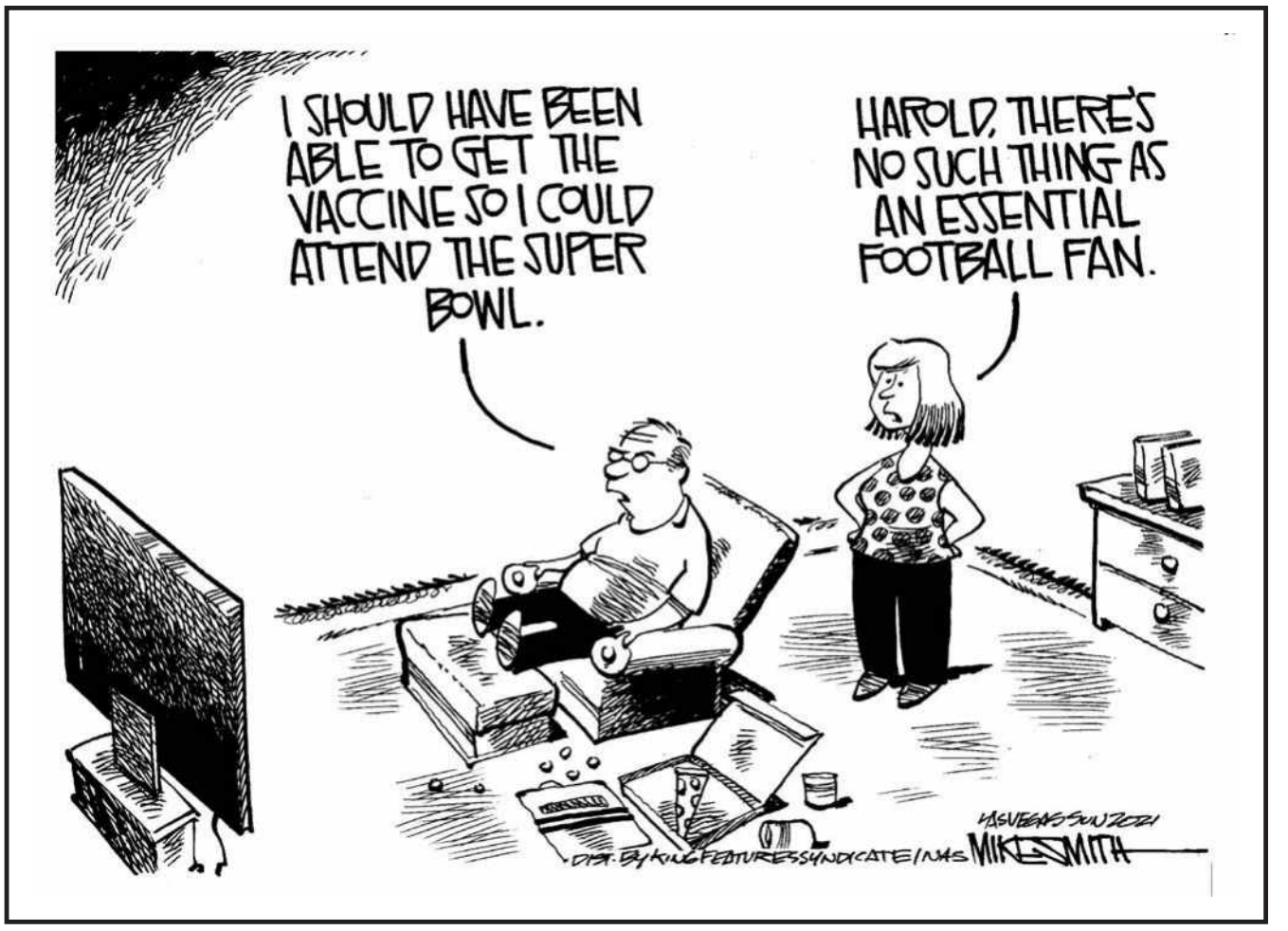
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET THE VACCINE SO I COULD ATTEND THE SUPER BOWL.
HAROLD, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN ESSENTIAL FOOTBALL FAN.
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS
MIKE SMITH

EDITORIAL

Republicans should have sidelined Marjorie Taylor Greene

Greene

The House of Representatives voted Thursday to remove Georgia's Marjorie Taylor Greene, a controversial and inflammatory Republican freshman, from her committee assignments. The vote was largely along party lines, although a handful of Republicans joined the Democratic majority. It's an extreme measure, advocates of the move admit—but Taylor Greene, they insist, is an extreme case.

Indeed she is, and this remedy is justified. But it would have been far better administered by her own party. If Democrats take it upon themselves to punish outrageous Republicans, and vice versa when Republicans are in a position to return the favor, Congress will take yet another step toward institutional breakdown. It's already hard for legislators to bridge differences and deliver policies capable of commanding wide support. The last thing the country needs is for this to get any harder.

Understand that Taylor Greene is no ordinary renegade. She's been a follower of the QAnon conspiracy theory that, among other things, suspects Democratic politicians and Hollywood celebrities of being members of a global cult that cannibalizes children. She thought it plausible that laser beams with Jewish connections started the wildfires in California. She's supported claims that the Parkland, Florida, high school massacre was a "false flag" operation and questioned whether a plane really hit the Pentagon on Sept. 11. Running for Congress, she posted a photo of herself with a rifle preparing to challenge Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's left-leaning "Squad." She's complained about "an Islamic invasion of our government." She's accused House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of treason ("a crime punishable by death," Taylor Greene pointed out). Almost as soon as President Joe Biden was sworn in, she filed a bill to impeach him. And her last-minute disavowals of some of this nonsense were half-hearted at best.

Taylor Greene should never have been elected. Unfortunately, she was. Having been elected, she should never have been appointed to the budget and education and labor committees. Unfortunately, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy decided otherwise. But in taking the initiative to correct his gross misjudgment, the Democrats risk their action being seen as just another partisan maneuver—which, in part, it was.

Earlier McCarthy had called the Democrats' move against Taylor Greene a distraction, and accused them of hypocrisy in failing to discipline their members on their

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Joe Biden had a choice: Go big or go bipartisan. He opted for big

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for The Los Angeles Times. *Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com*

When Joe Biden arrived in the White House, he promised a new dawn of unity and bipartisanship. But when he began to pursue a COVID relief bill, he met with Republican senators for only about two hours before deciding to push the measure through Congress without further negotiations.

Biden had two goals at the outset: to go big and to make the process bipartisan. They turned out to be incompatible.

"We got a chance to do something big here," the president said Friday in a meeting with House Democrats. "Real live people are hurting, and we can fix it."

But even relatively moderate Republicans balked at the $1.9 trillion the president wanted to spend. The GOP senators who met with Biden offered an opening bid of $618 million, less than a third of his target, and they didn't sound too willing to meet in the middle. Susan Collins of Maine, perhaps the least conservative Republican in the Senate, said even $900 billion would be too much. Sen. Jerry Moran of Kansas denounced Biden's request for aid to state governments as a subsidy for "fiscal irresponsibility."

Biden's first experiment in bipartisan deal making ended with hurt feelings and GOP complaints.

"Notwithstanding all the talk about bipartisan unity, Democrats are plowing ahead," Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky groused.

But there's an upside. Biden is now on track to get the kind of bill he wanted—even though he may have to win it with only Democratic votes. And that, in the president's hierarchy of needs, is clearly more important than making the process bipartisan.

White House aides say the success of the Biden presidency could hinge on the relief bill, which includes money for more vaccinations, relief checks of up to $1,400 per person, money for schools and progressive wish-list items like a cash subsidy for families with children.

The new administration's first priorities, one aide said, are "COVID, COVID, COVID."

Biden and his advisers say two experiences during the administration of Barack Obama have shaped their actions. One is the economic stimulus bill of 2009, which they trimmed to $787 billion in hopes of winning GOP support. The measure wasn't big enough to jump-start the economy, and unhappy voters revolted against Democrats in the 2010 midterm election.

"We can't do too much" this time, Biden said Friday. "We can do too little and sputter."

The second experience was Obama's fruitless search for bipartisan support on his healthcare legislation in 2010, a months-long quest that nearly torpedoed the entire bill. Biden said it was "an easy choice" to avoid similar negotiations this time.

His calculation is straightforward: In 2022, voters are more likely to remember whether he delivered enough aid to revive the economy than whether the bill passed with Republican votes.

The central plank of the bill, the $1,400 individual relief check, is wildly popular. A Quinnipiac Poll last week found that 78% of the public supports it, including 64% of Republicans.

So Biden chose to go ahead with reconciliation, which requires only 51 votes to pass a bill in the 100-member Senate, instead of the normal legislative process, which requires 60 votes.

Sixty votes is a high bar. It would have required keeping all 50 Democrats on board and winning support from at least 10 Republicans.

But in the polarized Senate of 2021, fewer than 10 GOP senators qualify in anyone's eyes as moderates. Among the senators who visited the White House last week, at least three are more conservative than McConnell. The chances of all 10 defying their leader to meet Democrats halfway aren't promising.

So, does that mean that bipartisanship is dead on arrival? Not entirely. Biden still convinced at least some GOP senators that he remains committed to seeking bipartisan cooperation.

"I believe the president is sincere," said Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, one of the 10 Republican lawmakers who met with Biden in the White House prior to the vote. "He wants to be bipartisan. He wants to see unity…. It's not clear that his staff sees it the same way."

Even now, under the majority-rule process of reconciliation, White House aides and Democratic senators say they're hoping to find ways to compromise with Republicans—at least around the edges. Last week, for example, Collins and Sen. Joe Manchin III (D-W.Va.) joined on an amendment to ensure that those

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Congress bows to the pen and the phone

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

President Joe Biden has proved that, if nothing else, he has a pen and a phone.

According to The Economist, he signed more executive orders in his first two days than President Donald Trump signed in nearly his first two months.

And he was just getting started.

Republicans have no standing to complain about Biden's spate of unilateral measures, given they were fine with Trump using exactly the same means. But that presidents of both parties govern this way doesn't make it better—it makes it worse.

Some executive actions starkly usurp congressional authority, while others are firmly within the executive's ambit. Yet the sheer amount of activity that presidents undertake on their own isn't in keeping with the spirit of our constitutional system.

The presidency has overawed a legislative branch that is only too willing to sign over power and responsibility. Congress has been an eager participant in its own neutering.

James Madison thought the legislature would be insatiable, steadily accumulating power. Instead, it is the least self-respecting branch, led by people who identify with the interests of presidents and their own parties over and above the interests of their own institution.

This means that Congress is essentially cut out of the action on important questions of national policy.

Obama blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, Trump blessed it, and Biden blocked it again.

Obama took us into the Paris climate accord, Trump took us out, and Biden is taking us back in.

Consider what Biden did on his own the other day. He directed the Interior Department to stop new oil and gas leases on federal land and to identify steps to double renewable energy production by 2030.

He created a special presidential envoy for climate, as well as a White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy, a National Climate Task Force, a Civilian Climate Corps Initiative, an Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, a White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council, and a White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

On top of this, he established a Justice Initiative to steer 40% of relevant federal investments to disadvantaged communities.

And on the seventh day, Biden rested (after tucking his pen back in his pocket).

If Congress had passed a bill doing all this, it'd be considered a pretty active day. Instead, Congress stood on the sidelines ... and commented.

"I'm proud that President Biden is announcing a slew of executive actions on climate," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer tweeted.

Schumer's only complaint is that Biden isn't doing more on his own authority.

This is the same Chuck Schumer who has been a legislator since 1975 when he took a seat in the New York State Assembly, who has been in Congress since 1981 and the Senate since 1999, and who ascended to majority leader about a week ago, representing the apex of a national legislative career.

And yet Schumer has urged Biden to declare a national climate emergency because it would allow him to do things "without legislation."

This would be like Chief Justice John Roberts giving Biden advice on how to pack the Supreme Court—except it's unimaginable that a Supreme Court justice would be so openly disdainful of the legitimacy and prerogatives of his or her own institution.

This is a particular congressional disease. As Yuval Levin of the American Enterprise Institute wrote in an essay for Commentary magazine, Congress has been delegating its authority to the executive branch for some time. What's new is that partisanship has created a loyalty for members of Congress that transcends their attachment to Congress itself, while more and more members consider their office merely a platform to get attention.

"Congress is weak and dysfunctional because that suits its members," Levin writes. "It could renew itself only if its members wanted such renewal."

All indications are that, no, it is perfectly content to be supplanted by the pen and phone.

JOE

From Page 8

$1,400 checks don't go to upper-income taxpayers.

There will also be opportunities for bipartisanship after the COVID relief bill when Congress looks at potential measures on infrastructure, immigration reform, climate change and healthcare.

But to the relief of progressives, it's now clear that Biden, who once promised that Republicans would experience an epiphany once he landed in the Oval Office, isn't really a starry-eyed romantic. "I'm not naïve," he told Democratic skeptics during the campaign. It turns out he was right.

He'll keep talking about unity. Given a choice between enacting progressive programs and reviving bipartisanship, he'll still try to do both. But if he can have only one or the other, he'll stick with the big programs he promised.

REPUBLICANS

From Page 8

side for reckless or disgraceful comments. He wasn't wrong about that—but he failed to explain why this relieved him of his own responsibility.

When questioned about Taylor Greene, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said that "Loony lies and conspiracy theories are cancer for the Republican Party and our country." What a pity that needed saying, but it happens to be true. McCarthy should have taken the lead in removing her from her posts—mainly because she's unfit to hold them but also because, if he needed another reason, she's mostly harming her fellow Republicans. She's a distraction, all right, and it was McCarthy's job to put an end to it.

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Everybody hates snirt. And if you don't know what that is, read on

By MARY SCHMICH
Chicago Tribune

Mary Schmich is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune *and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.*

We've entered the season of snirt.

You probably know snirt even if you don't know the word, which, according to my random interrogations, 99.9% of people don't. I didn't know it either until it was introduced to me a few years ago by a snirt obsessive who occasionally sends photos of his snirt sightings and has repeatedly urged me to write about this phenomenon. Today I'm obliging that wish as a distraction from the rest of what plagues us.

So what is snirt? Here are some of the guesses I received when I asked around:

Someone from a Dr. Seuss book

A sneeze with a snort

Laughing with a snort

Something between a smirk and a sneer

A little snack

Snot on your shirt

A relative of the weasel

The accidental accumulation of crumbs and whatnot that are found inside your bra at the end of the day

All of the above are wrong.

OK, Merriam-Webster defines "snirt" as a Scottish word that means "an unsuccessfully suppressed snort of laughter," so a couple of the above are technically close to right. But that's not the snirt we're talking about. We're also not talking about the Dutch pea soup called "snert."

If you live in or near Chicago, go look out your window. Those brown-flecked piles along the curbs, climbing tree trunks, suffocating your car? Those icy, cruddy heaps that grow higher each time the snowplow spits past?

That's snirt. Snow + dirt.

Snirt is everything fresh snow is not. Fresh snow is beautiful. Snirt looks like the devil's soul. Fresh snow is fleeting. Snirt lasts forever, or at least it seems that way. Unlike fresh snow, snirt is widely despised, except in a town in upstate New York that hosts its annual Snirt Run, in which thousands of ATV enthusiasts gather for what one media account called "a day of snow, dirt, fun."

Fun is not a word normally associated with snirt.

And yet snirt is a great word. Until I learned it, I didn't know how much I needed it. As the saying goes: If you name it, you tame it. Naming those dirty, depressing snow mounds has made them more tolerable.

And because words help us control our thoughts, I've invented a few more hybrid words to help us get through our current arctic blast.

snype: snow + hype

Snype is a common feature of winter weather reports, the ones that turn every snowfall into an arctic blast and every winter into the end of the world.

snirker: snow + shirker

The snirker is the neighbor who, though physically fit, never shovels. And then pulls his car into the spot you cleared.

snerk: snow + jerk

The snerk, unlike the snirker, does shovel. He shovels all his snow onto your driveway, gangway or lawn so that you're the one stuck with the snirt.

snaggart: snow + braggart

The snaggart constantly brags to friends in warm places that no one is as tough as people who spend winter with snow and snirt. "Snaggart" is widely considered a synonym for "Chicagoan."

snad (definition 1): snow + mad

The outrage you feel when the elation of a fresh snow wears off and you realize you're in for weeks of snirt.

snad (definition 2) snow + sad

The despair you feel when your outrage over snirt is exhausted and you realize wearily that the snirt will never, ever go away.

snovid: snow + COVID

Snovid, as in "snovid days," entered the language in the winter of 2021 to describe days when snow and the pandemic combined to keep people trapped at home. Snovid days make people very, very snad.

snungry: snow + hungry

When you're snungry, you're so sick of snovid days that you'll eat anything in your cupboards or fridge, the less nutritious and more caloric the better.

snorkout: snow + workout

This is an upbeat synonym for "show shoveling." Use of the word, as in "I had a great snorkout," helps you to focus on the fact that you burned calories and built muscle while shoveling snow into snirt.

snaint: snow + saint

The neighbor who shovels your walk or pushes your car out of the snirt.

snoplainer: snow + complain

The snoplainer is the person who constantly complains about snow, ice, cold and snirt. Also a synonym for "Chicagoan."

snappy: snow + happy

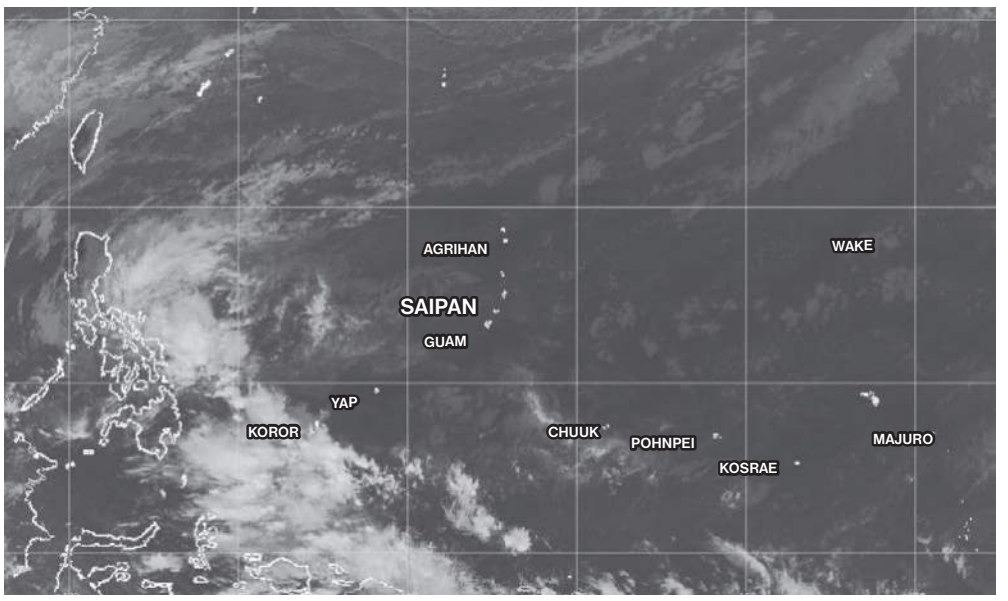
That feeling you get when you realize that after all those snad, snungry, snoplaining days of winter, the snirt will melt one day. By May.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
86º 75º	86º 75º	87º 75º	87º 75º	86º 75º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:33 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The remains of an old shear line are blowing through the Marianas, creating low clouds and a few sprinkles. The buoys reveal combined seas of 4 to 6 feet, composed mainly of an east-northeast trade-wind swell plus a small north swell and some wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	85º / 77º
Palau	Thunderstorm	85º / 79º
Yap	Thunderstorm	83º / 78º
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86º / 80º
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	85º / 79º
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	85º / 79º
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84º / 80º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	6:19 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM
Sunday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:22 AM	4:52 PM	-
Thursday	6:14 AM	5:51 PM	-
Friday	7:01 AM	6:46 PM	-
Saturday	7:44 AM	7:39 PM	-
Sunday	8:24 AM	8:29 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	72º / 57º
Beijing	Sunny	39º / 21º
Hong Kong	Sunny	64º / 52º
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	76º / 62º
London	Cloudy	37º / 30º
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	70º / 56º
Manila	Showers	84º / 72º
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82º / 63º
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81º / 67º
New York	Mostly Cloudy	61º / 36º
Osaka	Rain	45º / 36º
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43º / 28º
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	48º / 34º
Rome	Cloudy	57º / 46º
Salem	Cloudy	74º / 52º
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	43º / 32º
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	30º / 16º
Tokyo	Showers	46º / 36º
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	64º / 42º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:42 AM	Low Tide	-0.56
7:58 AM	High Tide	1.73
1:18 PM	Low Tide	1.05
6:05 PM	High Tide	1.75

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

What song reminds you of Valentine's Day?

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Whether it is the melody or lyrics that captivate you, there are songs that hit us in different ways especially during Valentine's Day. For this issue, we ask readers about music that in their mind is tied to the day of hearts:

"*Let's Get It On* by Marvin Gaye. No other classic gets you in the mood for love and for celebrating companionship. ...I listen to Marvin Gaye regularly but [I listened to] this particular song probably a few months ago. I am single so I don't get to play that song often (laughs)."

—Frankie Eliptico, interim president, Northern Marianas College

"*Love Will Keep Us Alive* by the Eagles. I love this song and it defines the role of loving one another as key to making this world a better place for all."

—Esther Muna, CEO, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

"*Lady in Red* by Chris DeBurgh because the lyrics shows the guy is absolutely in love with the girl. So hopelessly romantic, perfect for Valentine's Day."

—Shey Fernandez-Owens, Capital Hill

"*Unforgettable* by Nat King Cole because it's a classic love song. Reminds me of my parents and my dad playing it at home along with Frank Sinatra records."

—Jessie Delos Reyes Willsey, Capital Hill

"*Better Together* by Jack Johnson because love is the answer and it is always better when we are together."

—Nicole Babauta, director, CNMI Small Business Development Center

"*Can't Take My Eyes Off of You* by Lauryn Hill because this song makes me dance."

—Alyona Gersonde, Dan Dan

"*Stand By Me* by Ben E. King. This is the song we played when I walked down to meet Jeff at our wedding. We picked this as we both love it. We heard it in the movie that came out when we got engaged. The song was even in the top 10 (1st when it came out in 1961) This song was perfect for us as it wasn't traditional and neither was our wedding, or us!"

—Heidi Yelin, Capital Hill

"*Just The Way You Are* by Billy Joel because it describes love in in its true form. When you love someone, you love them for who they are, all their flaws and imperfections included. Billy Joel sings about wanting someone to talk to, being there in good and bad times. Valentine's Day celebrates love and romance and this song describes that in its raw form."

—Chris Concepcion, deputy director, Office of Planning and Development

"*Ordinary People* by John Legend because I usually have fights with my ex when it's Valentine's Day! But we end up making up afterwards. Something about this day makes women crazy, you know, me included. Must be the moon! (laughs). There is added pressure for couples to celebrate and women end up getting their hopes up on their man and getting disappointed. I mean, let's face it, men usually fall short on celebrating Valentine's."

—Candy, Marianas High School teacher

"*Always Be My Baby* by Mariah Carey because it's about a loving and healthy relationship. Always Be My Baby is like a promise that, no matter what happens, I love you and I will stand beside you."

—Kathy Fernandez, Garapan

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#Lovenotes

Dear **Rane, Hannah & Shiera**

These past few months make me reminisce all the memories we shared. The times where we laughed like there is no tomorrow, cried like we're never going to see each other again especially the times where we'd go to the beach and talk about how our life is going. I am deeply torn that one of us is thousands of miles away, but I always believe that we are never that far away maybe in distance but never in heart. I will always cherish all the adventures we had. I love you guys so much!
Happy Valentine's Day!

Kiara Manganti

To my baby boy Bubs,
Thank you for constantly dealing with my attitude and mood swings. I never knew home could be a person till I felt in love with you. You're my homie and lover all wrapped up in one human being. I will forever be thankful to the Lord for bringing me such a kind and patient person in my life. I know our love for each other will last a life time, because I know you are the only one for me. I love you and
Happy Valentine's Day!

Ma (Angie),
Ikaw and papaya
sa tinola ko.
Mahal kita!
From Pa (Manny)

Hey **Cupcake**,
Happy Valentines day! You're the most annoying person, most mean person, most weird person, and you're a knucklehead. But no matter how annoying you are I will never be tired of you. But no matter how mean you are, you always back it up with kindness and sweetness. But no matter how weird you are, I am always weirder. And no matter how much of a knucklehead you are, you will always be My Knucklehead! I love you through the hills and valleys, through the peaks and pits, through the ups and downs, and through the trials and triumphs!
Your Future Husband,
Fried Chicken (Sebby)

Dear **ken ken**,
Every day I thank God for blessing me with someone wonderful like you. Thank you for your love, kindness and patience. I look forward to celebrate many more Valentine's Day with you!
I love you always, **Iah**

Sa pinakasexy kong nanay,
Happy Valentines.
Roses are expensive, PUA still wala, so a love letter is all I could give.
iloveyou mommy.
Thank you for your endless care.
Love,
Your favorite Anak.

To my **loving Parents**,
Thank you for working hard just to be able to provide our wants and needs. I am thankful to have such hardworking parents. I Promise to give it back someday.
Love, **J**.

Hey **J**,
You've been nothing but amazing. You're one to count on through the worse and through good times of my life. This is not ideal, but you make every sacrifice worth the risks.
Happy Valentine's Day
bobobles.

To the three boys I love...
Daddy Mike, James & Colin

I thank the Lord for you three and you are the most wonderful blessing and Valentine a girl could ever ask for. I love you!

Love,
Mommy Nhorleen

To: **Nicole**
Happy Valentine's Day.
I'm really thankful to have you in my life. I can't wait to be with you again. Stay sweet and I miss you lotss!
From: **Chow**

To **Angelo B.**
I think you know you're in love when you see the person and you automatically smile and get butterflies in your tummy, but before I met you, I never knew what that would be like or how that felt. I never knew a love like this existed. I just want you to know that I'm so grateful to have you in my life and that I appreciate everything you do to keep me happy and for always loving me even when I'm at my worst, for being the person I can turn to when I need a shoulder to cry on. For not only being a boyfriend but also for being my best friend. I love you,
Happy Valentine's
Day love!

To **Kiko,**
For the past almost 3 years that you have been with me, I fully appreciate your patience, care and love.
Happy Valentine's day,
I love you.
From your little
Pogchamp

To **Danielle**,
1st Corinthians 13:4-6 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
You're as sweet as cotton candy hehe
love u
Rj

I may be first in line with you, but we know I will never get the chance. Just do know you put the "K" in okay, because you make everything okay whenever I think of going back to the streets. You are worth more than what this life time could give,
Khristelle Lysa.
From BB Cess

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VOX POPULI

Things I love to do with you

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Work, bills, children, and future plans are not the only ones that occupy the hearts and minds of married couples. It's also talking with their husband or wife about what makes them happy and what things they want to do together not only on Valentine's Day but every day.

Joe and Jamika Taijeron

BEA CABRERA

For **Salt & Barber Beauty Salon owners Joe and Jamika Taijeron**, both find joy not only in being married but managing a business together as well. "I like to travel with Joe but since we cannot travel, the other thing I like to do with him is to run errands together. I appreciate the days where we have a list of things to do which I normally do by myself. When we do it together, I rest in the fact that I am doing these things with someone I enjoy being with," Jamika said.

"As co-owners of a business, some of our errands include picking up supplies from the airport, mail for the post office, etc. Doing things together makes co-ownership much more fun. …I also like to go out on date night with my wife, just the two of us. Maybe a nice dinner with some peace and quiet. We don't have to do anything else but just enjoy each other's company," Joe said.

For **Derek and Tania Cutting of Cutting Solutions LLC,** partnership is always a work in progress and loving the little details about life that many tend to take for granted. "I love traveling the world with you, hiking, exploring and going on adventures with you, sunrise motorcycle rides with you, random sunset beach picnics with you, date nights with you, binge watching Netflix with you, jeepin' it with you, building our dreams with you and I love being a parent and loving our son Makai with you," Tania said.

"I love raising our son together and watching him become a strong, independent little man. I love when we ride side by side on our Harleys cruising the streets together, going to the gym to train with you, watching a movie on the couch with you, pushing you past your comfort zone and sharing the fruits of your labor, bicycle rides in the park with Makai and you and talking about new ideas and business opportunities with you," Derek said.

Derek and Tania Cutting

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Emily and Dustin Darr

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Emily and Dustin Darr of Papago moved to Saipan over a year ago and find common ground in hanging out at the beach with each other. "Currently, my favorite thing to do with him is to spend the day relaxing on the beach with good food and a little adventure. When the world opens back up, I love traveling together, experiencing new places and cultures. Being out of your comfort zone together forges a deeper and stronger bond!" Emily said.

"I enjoy her company as we relax at the beach or getting a couples massages. We love going out to lunch together and going on double dates with good friends. We also enjoy cooking fun and creative meals together," Dustin said.

Misty and Marty McPadden

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

For **Marty and Misty McPadden of Podjam-TV Productions**, one of the things that make their bond strong is the encouragement they get from each other. "My wife and I will be married for nine years this coming August and I love that we both love to travel for work and leisure. … The one thing that I love most is how she encouraged me when we started our media production business. Her support and belief in me has been instrumental in helping us grow. …I love that she likes to explore and try new things and she always encourages me to always be adventurous, especially when it comes to food. I don't think I would have visited or eaten exotic food without her cajoling me into it. Last but not least, I love that she listens and taught me to be open to speaking about anything under the sun and not worry about being judged." Marty said.

"One of the best things is to be able to work alongside my husband, building a media production business. We have faced our share of challenges, but we always have fun because I know Marty is always by my side and always has my back. I love that he gives me my space when I work that he even built a small command center for my home office, which has allowed me to do work and paint. I love that he makes me laugh a lot. He listens and is always patient when I have my bad days. My favorite part of my day is before we sleep, we watch cat videos together. …The best thing that he does for me is taking time to speak with my family and best friend when I am on a call with them, even if he is busy," Misty said.

See VOX POPULI on Page 14

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Better Together

Newly married **Russ Wilcox and Madge Gai of Dan Dan** are into various adventures. Whether on land, under the sea, or above mountains they know how to get the most out of everything that each day presents to them. "I love talking about the different points in our cultures, seeing what is different and what is actually similar. I love spending time in the outdoors of our amazing island—hiking, diving, swimming, exploring, and watching sunsets. I love working out and encouraging one another. I love being grumpy about being social with her/for her when I actually kind of like it most of the time," Russ said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Russ Wilcox and Madge Gai

"I love to go scuba diving with you every weekend, hiking, driving around in your little truck, seeing you laugh, I love when you pet our cat even if he likes being 'Mogui.' I love watching movies after your work and trying out food that you cooked for me. I love you," Madge said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Maria and Andrew Goethals

Maria and Andrew Goethals are ideal for each other—Maria makes delicious desserts and publish them at **amusingmaria.com** and Andrew loves trying them out. They admit they are usually both couch potatoes but when they get out to travel, their adventurous hearts kicks in. "I would not have been able to explore so many ancient temples and learn their history if not for Andrew. I also love when we are able to take out our kayaks to the water and explore. Food! I love trying out new food and restaurants or eating our favorite home-cooked meals. For the most part. Just hanging out with you at home and watching our shows are also part of my favorites," Maria said.

"The things that I love to do with you most is to explore. Whether it's searching for the best tacos in town, or climbing to the top of a ruin in a far-off jungle or kayaking to the very end of the creek, we are most alive and most together when we are going somewhere new. We both have suffered from 'wanderlust' at different times in our lives and when we give into it together, we have amazing experiences. Our journeys have just begun," Andrew said.

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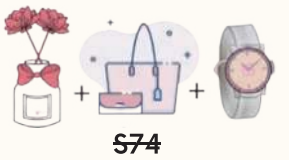

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Business

MARK RABAGO
Wink Tea & Cake is located in the Family Store building across Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Wink Tea & Cake opens in Garapan

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MARK RABAGO
Baker Chen Lin Lin with one of her impressive cake creations.

MARK RABAGO
Wink Tea & Cake's Mango Cloudtea and tiramisu and chocolate cakes.

At newly opened Wink Tea & Cake in Garapan, you can have your cake and eat it too. Their drinks are also as amazing, making them the new go-to place for the island's youth.

Owner Zhang Lian Peng opened the pastel-colored tea house last Jan. 9 to give Saipan residents a new take on tea and fruit drinks, which he says are 100% natural and without any additives.

"On Saipan there are no real tea houses. Nowadays, the younger generation in Asian countries enjoy going to tea houses and hanging out with their friends. And that trend is slowly happening here and we want to be at the forefront of… that trend on Saipan," he said.

A few weeks since opening, Wink Tea & Cake has enamored itself with customers due to its popular Cloud Tea selections that come in mango, grape, pineapple, strawberry, dragon fruit, and watermelon flavors. Zhang said Cloud Tea is not like any other drink on island as they use a cheese and cream concoction as a topping, giving the first layer of the drink a cloud-like appearance.

At any given day, the establishment also makes tiramisu, chocolate, and other fancy cakes in-house that complement the array of drinks they serve. Zhang's wife, Chen Lin Lin, makes the cake and she definitely knows her craft. She even went to China to enroll in a nine-week course in making custom cakes.

Before Wink Tea & Cake, Zhang used to operate a Chinese restaurant called Serene Restaurant at the same location. It used to be a favorite of Chinese and Korean tourists, but sales slowly went down a year ago and then fell down a proverbial cliff when the COVID-19 pandemic put the tourism industry at a complete standstill.

"But even before the pandemic, we already planned to change our business into a tea house. Let's just say COVID-19 hastened the switch," said Zhang.

A couple of things were already going for Zhang even before they opened Wink Tea & Cake. One is the strategic location, which is right at the heart of Saipan's main tourist district of Garapan. Second is their willingness to try something new; and third is their commitment to serving the local clientele.

"Under the pandemic, business is still good. No tourists but a lot of locals when they come here they more often than not come back. Majority are teenagers and they eventually invite their whole family to try us out. They all seem to like our cakes and the drinks. It also helps, I guess, that our little tea house is close to Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan and Hyatt Regency Saipan where a lot of events are still happening," he added.

Wink Tea & Cake also has a current promotion where anybody who shares images of Wink Tea & Cake on social media will get a free drink (limit one free drink per customer).

At the end of the day, Zhang said he just wants to give the local community a new experience and his tea house and cake shop is definitely something new and fresh on the island. "Try our new drinks and cakes at Wink Tea. You won't regret it," he said.

Wink Tea & Cake is located in the Family Store building across Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. It is open from Monday to Sunday, 10am-10pm. For more information, call 233-4965 or reach them through their Facebook page.

Table for 2 around Saipan this Valentine's Day

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Love is in all four corners of Saipan this Valentine's Day. Whether you are headed to the north, south, east, or west of the island to celebrate the day, a table for you and your special someone is waiting.

Go north

Want to skip the busy Valentine date night and have a couple's lunch instead? Inas' Kitchen serves a fusion of local, American, Mexican, and Japanese food and there is always something new to try from their wide array of plate lunches, tacos, asada, and more.

Chef and co-owner Francisco "Sonnie" Sablan said the dishes are a combination of all of the food he has tasted and ate in all of his travels but working on Saipan has also given him insight into what taste the community craves for. Inas' Kitchen is open Monday to Saturday, 11am to 2pm. For more information call (670) 488-1627.

On Valentine's Day, enjoy a BBQ Buffet Dinner "ala minute" from 6pm to 9pm at the Loria Restaurant of Kensington Hotel in San Roque. Aside from beef, chicken, and seafood BBQ, fill your tummy with the chef's grilled half-lobster dish and enjoy unlimited beer, wine and mimosas. A special giveaway of a box of chocolates awaits couples. For more information, call (670) 237-4584

To equal the sweetness shared between couples, OHAS, also of Kensington Hotel, offers a "Couple Valentine's Cake" for only $45. Enjoy one white chocolate glacage for her and one dark chocolate coating glacage for him. Reservation of one day in advance is required. For more information, call (670) 237-4515

Aqua Resort Saipan wants you to treat your sweetheart to a romantic dinner at Kevin's-The Prime Rib & Seafood. Wine, dine, and relax as you feast on a delicious five-course dinner. Known as the most romantic restaurant on Saipan, allow Kevin's to create the mood for you with their old Hollywood ambiance and romantic piano music playing in the background. For more information, call (670) 322-1234.

Love in the south

It takes two to tango. Join the "Partner Valentine Yoga" at the Surf Club Saipan beach led by yoga instructor Kerri Bauer on Feb. 11, from 5pm to 6pm. "Partner work allows for a fun and creative exploration of yoga poses. Working in pairs offers new and unique perspectives into the flow and function of yoga," she said. Cost to join is $8 per person for Latte Built Gym members and $15 per person for non-members. For more information, call (670) 484-3848.

After yoga, transfer inside Surf Club Saipan and order their Valentine's Day Special that will run from Feb. 10 to 17. For only $80, get a set of two Surf & Turf main course, two minestrone soup, two Caesar salads, and two strawberry cheesecake. With the pink and orange sunset in front of you, enjoy a budget-friendly meal that is light on the pocket. For more information, call (670) 235-1122

La Vista Pizza & Chicken Restaurant in Chalan Piao is unique compared to other pizza places on Saipan because of its sweet potato edge. "Instead of cheese, we chose sweet potato, which gives a slice of pizza another flavor," said owner Eugene Hong.

Affordability is also one of La Vista Pizza & Chicken's main attraction. One medium pizza (eight slices) goes for only $15 and sweet potato edge pizza is only $20. Toppings include Supreme, pepperoni, cheese-lover's, meat- lover's, Hawaiian, Vegetarian Delight, Chicken Pizza, La Vista Combo, Saipan Special, and Fisherman Supreme. La Vista Pizza & Chicken is open Monday-Saturday from 11am to 8pm. For more information, call (670) 235-9292.

The best in the west

For meat lover couples, Country House Restaurant Saipan in Garapan has an ongoing promo for Valentine's week—20% off on their "Ribeye & Sirloin Steak." Enjoy their mouthwatering cowboy steak (18 ounces of ribeye) for only $44.80. They are open from Monday to Sunday for lunch, 11am to 2pm, and for dinner, 5:30pm to 9pm. For more information, call (670) 233-1908 or go to their Facebook page: Country House Restaurant Saipan.

Head in any direction with your love at 360 Revolving Restaurant in Susupe. Enjoy their pre-Valentine and Valentine's Day specials for only $65 per person. This includes loaded baked potato soup, Pacific Rim salad composed of crispy greens, seared tuna, almond nuts, and mandarin oranges tossed in a light soy sesame vinaigrette. For appetizer, enjoy their tossed baguette with Philly cheese steaks spread. Main entree is a choice between meat and fish: grilled 10-oz marinated steak and blackened, shrimp skewers with pineapple and bacon mushroom sauce served with herb-roasted potato wedges and vegetables or oven baked mahi-mahi and scallops with Swiss cheese and caramelized onion cream sauce served with pasta putanesca. Always save the best for last with their chocolate mousse topped with mixed berry compote. They also have one whole lobster for only $99 and 25% off on all bottled wines and champagnes, For more information, call (670) 234-3600

Find peace in the middle of the hustle and bustle of Garapan. Casa Urashima behind Kristo Rai Church is the place to go for couples and families because, even with the adult and romantic interior, children are also welcome. Enjoy their local and Japanese dish fusion and a variety of pasta and unique dishes only Casa Urashima can offer. They are open Monday-Saturday from 11am to 2pm. For more information and for take-our orders, call 233-3303 or reach them through Facebook.

Everything starts in the east

Whether you prefer breakfast, lunch, or dinner for two, Judy's Restaurant in Dan Dan is the place for you. Known for its delicious local, American, Filipino, Japanese, and Korean dishes, people are also in awe of its cozy interiors—a mix of antique and modern furniture that just work. For more information, call (670) 288-2266

MiCafe's Snack Corner in Dan Dan across Joeten Supermarket is a quaint place for couples of all ages. They offer specialty drinks that you can have over sweet conversations like iced tea, milk tea, milkshakes in Oreo, Milo, and mocha flavors and hot or cold coffee. Let their array of appetizers, sandwiches, fried rice, noodles, rice in a box, main dishes such as kare-kare, garlic shrimp, beef finger steak, sirloin steak, fried chicken, and barbecue on a stick amaze you. For more information, call (670) 235-6422.

Nation

Vaccine drive gains speed, but maskless fans fuel worries

The drive to vaccinate Americans against the coronavirus is gaining speed and newly recorded cases have fallen to their lowest level in three months, but authorities worry that raucous Super Bowl celebrations could fuel new outbreaks.

More than 4 million more vaccinations were reported over the weekend, a significantly faster clip than in previous days, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nearly one in 10 Americans have now received at least one shot. But just 2.9% of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated, a long way from the 70% or more that experts say must be inoculated to conquer the outbreak.

Newly confirmed infections have declined to an average of 117,000 a day, the lowest point since early November. That is a steep drop from the peak of nearly 250,000 a day in early January.

The number of Americans in the hospital with COVID-19 has also fallen sharply to about 81,000, down from more than 130,000 last month.

Health officials say the decline in hospitalizations and new cases most likely reflects an easing of the surge that was fueled by holiday gatherings, and perhaps better adherence to safety precautions.

The drop-off in new cases comes as fewer tests for the virus are being reported. But experts say the decline in cases is real. It is more pronounced than the apparent slowdown in testing, and it is accompanied by other encouraging signs.

"We are seeing a real decline because it's been sustained over time and it's correlated with decreasing hospitalizations," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist at Johns Hopkins University. "That tells you that there does seem to be something afoot."

The question, he said, is whether the lower numbers can be sustained as new variants of the virus take hold in the United States. President Joe Biden has announced plans to spend billions to increase rapid testing by the summer. ***(AP)***

Sheriff: Hacker tried to taint Florida city's water with lye

A hacker gained unauthorized entry to the system controlling the water treatment plant of a Florida city of 15,000 and tried to taint the water supply with a caustic chemical, exposing a danger cybersecurity experts say has grown as systems become both more computerized and accessible via the internet.

The hacker who breached the system at the city of Oldsmar's water treatment plant on Friday using a remote access program shared by plant workers briefly increased the amount of sodium hydroxide by a factor of one hundred (from 100 parts per million to 11,100 parts per million), Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri said during a news conference Monday.

Sodium hydroxide, also called lye, is used to treat water acidity but the compound is also found in cleaning supplies such as soaps and drain cleaners. It can cause irritation, burns and other complications in larger quantities.

Fortunately, a supervisor saw the chemical being tampered with — as a mouse controlled by the intruder moved across the screen changing settings — and was able to intervene and immediately reverse it, Gualtieri said. Oldsmar is about 15 miles (25 kilometers) northwest of Tampa.

Gualtieri said the public was never in danger.

But he did say the intruder took "the sodium hydroxide up to dangerous levels."

Oldsmar officials have since disabled the remote-access system, and say other safeguards were in place to prevent the increased chemical from getting into the water. Officials warned other city leaders in the region — which was hosting the Super Bowl — about the incident and suggested they check their systems.

Experts say municipal water and other systems have the potential to be easy targets for hackers because local governments' computer infrastructure tends to be underfunded. ***(AP)***

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-043

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"CNMI CORAL NURSERY OUT-PLANTING AND UP-SELLING PROJECT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL OUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MR. ZACHARY WILLIAMS** AT zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-041

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"CNMI WETLAND DELINEATION TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL OUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **THE DCRM PLANNING TEAM** AT planning@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

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/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM-042

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2021 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF THREE (3) NEW PICK-UP TRUCK 4WD/4-FULL-DOORS FOR THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/CRB-044

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) NEW PICK-UP TRUCK 4WD/4-FULL-DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLES (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/CRB-045

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) NEW UTILITY SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLES DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLES (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

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ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

Asia

Myanmar junta imposes curfew

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar's new military rulers on Monday signaled their intention to crack down on opponents of their takeover, issuing decrees that effectively banned peaceful public protests in the country's two biggest cities.

The restrictions were ordered after police fired water cannons at hundreds of protesters in the capital, Naypyitaw, who were demanding the military hand power back to elected officials. It was just one of many demonstrations around the country.

Rallies and gatherings of more than five people, along with motorized processions, were banned, and an 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew was imposed for areas of Yangon and Mandalay, the country's first- and second-biggest cities, where thousands of people have been demonstrating since Saturday.

Protesters in Yangon rallied Monday at a major downtown intersection raising three-finger salutes that are symbols of resistance and carrying placards saying, "Reject the military coup" and "Justice for Myanmar."

There were also demonstrations in towns in the north, southeast and east of the country.

The decrees enabling the new restrictive measures were issued on a township-by-township basis, and were expected to be extended to other areas as well. They say they were issued in response to people carrying out unlawful actions that harm the rule of law, a reference to the protests.

The growing defiance was striking in a country where past demonstrations have been met with deadly force. That resistance was happening in Naypyitaw, whose population includes many civil servants and their families, spoke to the level of anger among people who had only begun to taste democracy in recent years after five decades of military rule.

» Also bans meetings as protests swell

"We do not want the military junta," said Daw Moe, a protester in Yangon. "We never ever wanted this junta. Nobody wants it. All the people are ready to fight them."

The coup came the day newly elected lawmakers were supposed to take their seats in Parliament after November elections. The generals have said that vote was marred by fraud—though the country's election commission has dismissed that claim.

State media for the first time on Monday made reference to the protests, claiming they were endangering the country's stability.

"Democracy can be destroyed if there is no discipline," declared a statement from the Ministry of Information, read on state television station MRTV. "We will have to take legal actions to prevent acts that are violating state stability, public safety and the rule of law."

However, the military commander who led the coup and is now Myanmar's leader made no mention of the unrest in a 20-minute televised speech Monday night, his first to the public since the takeover.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing instead repeated the claims about voting fraud that have been the justification for the military's takeover, allegations that were refuted by the state election commission. He added that his junta would hold new elections as promised in a year and hand over power to the winners, and explained the junta's intended policies for COVID-19 control and the economy.

The growing protests recall previous movements in the Southeast Asian country's long and bloody struggle for democracy. On Sunday, tens of thousands of protesters rallied at Yangon's Sule Pagoda, which was a focal point of demonstrations against military rule during a massive 1988 uprising and again during a 2007 revolt led by Buddhist monks. The military used deadly force to end both of those uprisings. Aside from a few officers, soldiers have not been in the streets at protests this past week.

Australian leader dismisses reports of China-built city

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—The Australian prime minister on Monday dismissed as "speculative" reports that a Chinese company plans to build a new industrial island city near Australia's porous sea border with Papua New Guinea.

Hong Kong-registered WYW Holding Ltd. plans to build a $30 billion city that includes a seaport and industrial area on Daru Island in the Torres Strait, Australian media have reported. The reports cite company letters to the Papua New Guinea government from April last year.

Daru Island is a population of 20,000 people within 5 kilometers (3 miles) of Australia's Saibai Island and about 200 kilometers (120 miles) from the Australian mainland.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison played down the prospect of the city being built.

"I honestly think it's just speculative," Morrison told Sydney Radio 2SM. "It's just people flying some kites and I'm not going to overreact to the noise that is flying around out there."

"I speak pretty regularly with the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea (James Marape) and we have a very good relationship and he well understands our relationship and the importance of our other partners and I couldn't see Papua New Guinea being terribly hasty on anything like that," Morrison added.

Marape's office said the prime minister wasn't aware of the proposal, but added that his government would not turn away foreign investment that complied with Papua New Guinea laws and benefited locals.

Analysts have said the proposal makes no economic sense and some suspect China wants to build a wharf for use by its navy.

The Unites States and Australia are partnering to redevelop Papua New Guinea's Lombrum Naval Base on Manus Island in the country's north as concerns rise about China's growing influence in the region.

In November last year, Papua New Guinea signed a memorandum of understanding with Chinese firm Fujian Zhonghong Fishery Company to build a $160 million fish processing plant also on Daru.

Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton said the government was "very keen" to discuss with Papua New Guinea "what proposals are on the table."

"I think there are all sorts of sovereignty issues and there are local issues in terms of land owners and land rights, et cetera that I think would provide a significant hurdle," Dutton told Nine Network television on Friday.

"So, we'll look at it closely, but Australia will always act in our best interests and ... to support our neighbors," he added.

Papua New Guinea is the largest recipient of Australian foreign aid. Papuan vessels can operate in a shared fishing zone between the two neighbors under a treaty that recognizes the trade and family links between the Torres Strait island communities that have existed for thousands of years.

World

Sudan's PM reshuffles Cabinet

CAIRO (AP)—Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on Monday announced a Cabinet reshuffle to add rebel ministers as part of a peace deal that transitional authorities struck with a rebel alliance last year.

AP

Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announces new cabinet in Khartoum, Sudan, Monday, Feb. 8, 2021.

Hamdok announced his new Cabinet, which includes ministers from the Sudan Revolutionary Front, an alliance of armed groups, in a televised news conference in the capital, Khartoum.

The peace deal was signed in October in Juba after months of negotiations and gave rebels positions in the ruling Sovereign Council and the Cabinet along with 75 legislative seats in a transitional parliament the prime minister said would be announced in late February.

Hamdok said the new Cabinet was established as a "political consensus" following torturous monthslong discussions aimed at "protecting this country from collapsing."

Mariam al-Mahdi, deputy chief of the country's largest Umma Party and daughter of Sadiq al-Mahdi, Sudan's last democratically elected prime minister, was named foreign minister.

Gibril Ibrahim was appointed head of the Finance Ministry. He is the leader of the Justice and Equality Movement, which is part of the Sudan Revolutionary Front.

The prime minister kept Nasredeen Abdulbari as justice minister and Yasser Abbas as irrigation minister. The military also kept Maj. Gen. Yassin Ibrahim Yassin as defense minister.

Hamdok did not name an education minister, saying consultations are ongoing. The new 25-minister Cabinet has four women.

Hamdok dissolved his old Cabinet on Sunday in an expected move that came after the Sovereign Council appointed three representatives of the Sudan Revolutionary Front as new members.

The three rebel leaders joined the other 11 members of the council, formed in 2019 following a power-sharing agreement between military commanders and civilian protesters who spearheaded the monthslong uprising that led to al-Bashir's ouster.

Sudan is on a fragile path to democracy after a popular uprising led the military to overthrow longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. A transitional military-civilian government is now in power, trying to end decades-long rebellions in various parts of the country.

Reaching a negotiated settlement with rebels in Sudan's far-flung provinces was a crucial goal for the transitional government. The deal reached last year was hailed as a step toward reviving Sudan's battered economy and rejoining the international community after years of isolation.

EU countries expel Russian diplomats in Navalny dispute

BERLIN (AP)—Germany, Poland and Sweden on Monday each declared a Russian diplomat in their country "persona non grata," retaliating in kind to last week's decision by Moscow to expel diplomats from the three European Union countries over the case of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Russia had accused diplomats from Sweden, Poland and Germany of attending a demonstration in support of Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most high-profile political foe.

"We have informed the Russian Ambassador that a person from the Russian embassy is asked to leave Sweden," Sweden's Foreign Minister Ann Linde wrote on Twitter. "This is a clear response to the unacceptable decision to expel a Swedish diplomat who was only preforming his duties."

Germany's foreign ministry said Russia's decision to expel the European diplomats "was not justified in any way," insisting that the German Embassy staffer had been acting within his rights under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to "inform himself about developments on site."

The ministry added that the decision was taken in close coordination with Poland, Sweden and the EU's diplomatic service. Poland's foreign ministry tweeted that "in accordance with the principle of reciprocity" it considers "the diplomat working at the Consulate General in Poznan as a persona non grata."

In a statement, EU lawmakers also appealed to "all EU Member States to show maximum solidarity with Germany, Poland and Sweden and take all appropriate steps to show the cohesiveness and strength of our Union."

The parliamentarians called for "a new strategy for the EU's relations with Russia, centered around support for civil society, which promotes democratic values, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights."

The tit-for-tat expulsions come as EU officials ponder the future of the 27-nation bloc's troubled relations with Moscow amid deep concern that their large eastern neighbor sees democracy as a threat and wants to distance itself further from the EU.

Moscow's decision Friday was as an extra slap in the face for the Europeans because it came as the bloc's top diplomat—foreign policy chief Josep Borrell—was meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Borrell said he learned about the expulsions on social media.

"The messages sent by Russian authorities during this visit confirmed that Europe and Russia are drifting apart," Borrell wrote in a blog on his return to Brussels. "It seems that Russia is progressively disconnecting itself from Europe and looking at democratic values as an existential threat."

He said the trip left him "with deep concerns over the perspectives of development of Russian society and Russia's geostrategic choices," and the expulsions, which he requested be dropped, "indicate that the Russian authorities did not want to seize this opportunity to have a more constructive dialogue."

Good Housekeeping

Sweet potatoes? Sweet! 5 recipes you will love

By DANIEL NEMAN
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Parmesan sweet potatoes are photographed on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021.
PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN GOODEN/ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/TNS

There is no mistaking a sweet potato.

You can't eat one and wonder whether it is, perhaps, a zucchini. No one has ever sampled one and confused it with a turnip. It is impossible to take one for broccoli, or even a regular potato.

Sweet potato is a sweet potato is a sweet potato.

Its uniqueness is both its curse and its charm. Nothing else is quite like it, but that also means its utility is limited. It is not something you would ever want to use as a substitute for another ingredient. It is, as they say, what it is.

One thing it isn't, incidentally, is a yam. Though both are root vegetables, they are unrelated (for that matter, sweet potatoes are only distantly related to our common potatoes). They don't even look alike—yams resemble horseradish roots, and can grow to be more than 50 pounds—and yams are much less sweet, drier and starchier.

True yams are almost never sold in America, though you can sometimes find them in international markets. In general, if it is labeled either a yam or a sweet potato, it's a sweet potato.

And that is fortunate, because I just cooked five dishes featuring sweet potatoes, and they were all delicious, down to the last orange crumb.

I started with chili, which is a good place to start in all circumstances. A friend had recommended a vegan sweet potato chili recipe that he likes, and he recommended it so strenuously that I decided to give it a try.

I don't always see eye-to-eye with this friend, though we have been close for nearly 50 years. But I'll give him this: He knows his vegan sweet potato chili.

Sweet and hot flavors always go well together, as long as they are not too sweet and not too hot. In this chili they are a perfect blend, with the mild natural sweetness of the sweet potato bringing out the best in the mild heat of the chili powder, and vice versa.

It makes a richly flavored, robust meal, heavy with black beans, tomatoes, diced onion and red bell pepper providing a foundation of flavor for the star attraction, the sweet potatoes. Don't tell anyone, but I added a bit of hot sauce to my bowl.

Sweet potato fries, of course, are always popular. I thought about simply dropping them into hot oil and frying them, but then I came across a recipe for oven-baked fries—though "oven-baked fries" is an oxymoron.

I'm not actually sure if baking fries in an oven is any better for you than frying them in oil. The recipe I used requires two tablespoons of oil for two large sweet potatoes, and I am not convinced that fries that are fried would soak up more than that amount.

Still, the reason to make oven-baked sweet-potato fries is compelling: They are excellent.

Baking them in an oven allows the fries' exterior to become crispy, or at least moderately crispy, while the interior is soft and creamy. They are just what fries should be, only sweeter than ordinary fries.

Perhaps it is counterintuitive, but these sort-of-sweet fries are even better when served not with ketchup but with honey. Add a little cinnamon for an extra treat.

The next dish I made is similar in some ways to the oven-baked fries. Parmesan Baked Sweet Potatoes are cooked the same way—tossed with a little bit of oil and then baked—so they have the same crisp and creamy textures. But the similarity ends there.

The fries are spiced with garlic powder, paprika, salt and black pepper; these intense flavors contrast nicely with the smooth, sweet taste of the sweet potatoes. But the Parmesan Baked Sweet Potatoes offer a little more than the Parmesan cheese melted on top under the broiler at the end of cooking.

The cheese here serves only as an accent. It is an exclamation point at the end of a sweet sweet-potato sentence.

Next up was the baked-potato version of a sweet potato. The sweet potato here is baked whole until it is completely tender. So far, there is nothing extraordinary about it.

The extraordinary part comes from the sauce that is drizzled over the top. The sauce begins with melted butter that has been browned, so it tastes a little nuttier. That is combined with a bit of honey and a dash of vinegar, for a subdued sweet-and-sour effect, and some crushed red pepper to bring on just enough heat.

If you like the sauce on sweet potatoes you can try adding it to anything from winter squash to oatmeal to ice cream.

Last came dessert. Sweet potatoes are one of the very few vegetables that can legitimately be used in dessert.

I made a sweet potato pie. Of course I did. What else would a pie-lover make?

The ingredients may sound familiar: cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves. It's what goes into any pumpkin pie worth its salt (salt is also an ingredient). But what makes this sweet potato pie better than ordinary pumpkin pies are the other ingredients.

Along with the heavy cream and eggs, this pie also benefits from brown sugar and bourbon. These additions bring a rich and round depth to the pie. It is a flavor-forward dessert, where the ingredients all act in harmony to bring color and emphasis to the sweet potato at the heart of it all.

■■■

SWEET POTATO PIE

Yield: 8 servings

1 pie crust
1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes
1 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup good maple syrup
1/2 cup granulated sugar
5 tablespoons salted butter, melted
3 eggs beaten
1/4 cup bourbon
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place pie crust in a 9-inch pan and poke holes all over with a fork. Line with aluminum foil or parchment paper, weight down with pie weights or dried beans and bake until edges just begin to turn golden brown, about 15 to 18 minutes. Remove weights and lining, and cool thoroughly to room temperature.

2. Raise oven temperature to 425 degrees. Place sweet potatoes on a baking sheet, pierce all over with a fork and roast for 1 hour. Remove them from the oven, peel and place in a large mixing bowl. Mash with a potato masher. Lower oven temperature to 325 degrees.

3. Add the cream, brown sugar, maple syrup, granulated sugar, melted butter, eggs, bourbon, cinnamon, salt, nutmeg, cloves, pepper and ginger to the mashed sweet potatoes and stir well to combine. Pour into the prebaked pie shell (you may have some filling left over). Bake 50 minutes. Serve warm or cold.

Per serving: 484 calories; 22 g fat; 11 g saturated fat; 106 mg cholesterol; 6 g protein; 67 g carbohydrate; 42 g sugar; 4 g fiber; 476 mg sodium; 84 mg calcium

Adapted from "My Beverly Hills Kitchen" by Alex Hitz

ROASTED SWEET POTATOES WITH HOT HONEY BROWNED BUTTER

Yield: 4 servings

4 small to medium sweet potatoes, scrubbed
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
Salt and pepper
Flaky sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

2. Poke each sweet potato all over with a fork and place directly on the oven rack. Roast until they are impossibly tender, with bits of sweet potato sugar caramelizing in the spot they've been poked, 60 to 80 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a small pot over medium heat, swirling the pan until the butter starts to bubble and brown, about 5 minutes. Add the honey, vinegar and red pepper flakes, and season with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and set aside (this sauce can be made up to 5 days in advance and kept refrigerated; rewarm in a small pot before using).

4. Once the sweet potatoes are out of the oven, slit them down the middle. Warm up the browned butter mixture and pour over the sweet potatoes (alternatively, scoop the flesh out of the skins and transfer it to a bowl or serving dish, then drizzle with the browned butter sauce). Sprinkle with flaky sea salt.

Per serving: 300 calories; 17 g fat; 11 g saturated fat; 46 mg cholesterol; 2 g protein; 36 g carbohydrate; 14 g sugar; 4 g fiber; 861 mg sodium; 47 mg calcium

Recipe from "Dining In" by Alison Roman

OVEN-BAKED SWEET POTATO FRIES

Yield: 6 servings

2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper and place in oven. Preheat oven (with baking sheets in them) to 400 degrees.

2. Cut the sweet potatoes into sticks 1/4- to 1/2-inch wide and 3 inches long, and toss them with the oil.

3. Mix the garlic powder, paprika, salt and pepper in a small bowl, and toss them with the sweet potatoes. Remove the hot baking sheets from the oven, scatter them with the fries in a single layer and return the baking sheets to the oven.

4. Bake until brown and crisp on the bottom, about 12 to 15 minutes, then flip and cook until the other side is crisp, about 10 minutes. Serve hot.

Per serving: 130 calories; 4 g fat; 1 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 2 g protein; 23 g carbohydrate; 5 g sugar; 4 g fiber; 353 mg sodium; 36 mg calcium

Adapted from a recipe by Mark Bittman in the New York Times

PARMESAN SWEET POTATOES

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

3 sweet potatoes
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
Pepper
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, finely grated

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Peel sweet potatoes and cut into 11/2-inch chunks. In a large bowl, toss sweet potatoes with oil, salt and a generous amount of pepper. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet.

2. Bake 15 minutes, flip sweet potatoes and cook until brown and tender, 10 minutes. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Cook under broiler until the cheese has melted, 1 to 2 minutes.

Per serving (based on 4): 156 calories; 7 g fat; 11 g saturated fat; 2 mg cholesterol; 2 g protein; 20 g carbohydrate; 4 g sugar; 3 g fiber; 387 mg sodium; 63 mg calcium

Adapted from a recipe by Kelli Foster in thekitchn.com

VEGAN SWEET POTATO CHILI

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

2 or 3 sweet potatoes, about 1 1/2 to 2 pounds
2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, undrained
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 large white onion, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
3 or 4 garlic cloves, minced
1 to 2 tablespoons mild pickled jalapenos, optional
1 tablespoon chili powder
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon oregano
2 (14-ounce) cans fire-roasted tomatoes
1 1/2 cups water
1 tablespoon cornmeal
1 teaspoon molasses or other sweetener
1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

2. Cube sweet potatoes and place in a large bowl. Add 1 tablespoon of the juice from the beans, salt and paprika, and toss to coat. Scatter in single layer on a baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes and set aside to cool.

3. Add oil to a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion and red bell pepper, and sauté until softened, about 3 to 5 minutes.

4. Stir in garlic, jalapeño if using, chili powder, cumin and oregano. Cook 3 minutes, stirring often.

5. Add tomatoes, water, cornmeal, sweetener and cocoa. Bring to a simmer and cook 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

6. Drain and rinse black beans; add to chili. Add roasted sweet potatoes and taste for seasoning; add salt as needed.

Per serving (based on 8): 282 calories; 2 g fat; 2 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 10 g protein; 55 g carbohydrate; 12 g sugar; 15 g fiber; 12 mg sodium; 120 mg calcium

Life & Style

VP's historic election celebrated in cracked glass portrait

The installation "Vice President Kamala Harris Glass Ceiling Breaker" is seen at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2021. AP

WASHINGTON (AP)— Two weeks after Kamala Harris was sworn in as the first woman to be vice president , her barrier-breaking career has been memorialized in a portrait that depicts her face emerging from the cracks in a massive sheet of glass.

The 6-by-6 foot (1.8 meter), 350-pound (159 kilogram) portrait, meant to symbolize Harris breaking through a glass ceiling, was unveiled Thursday at the Lincoln Memorial by groups excited by Harris' historic election as the first woman and person of color to the nation's second-highest office.

"This will just be a wonderful visual emblem of this moment in time and hopefully people will reflect a little bit on all the barriers that have been broken by her election," said Holly Hotchner, president and CEO of the National Women's History Museum, a co-sponsor of the project.

Harris has notched a series of firsts during a legal and political career that has taken her from California to the office of vice president in Washington.

The 56-year-old daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants was the first woman and person of color to serve as San Francisco's district attorney, the first woman and first Black person to become California's attorney general, the first Black person to represent California in the U.S. Senate and the first woman, Black person and Asian American to be elected vice president.

She is also the first vice president with a historically Black college, Howard University, for an alma mater.

"I think what makes it so moving to me is to see the tiny cracks, to see those fissures and everything they represent," said Lindsay Kaplan, a co-founder of Chief, a networking organization for female executives and portrait co-sponsor.

The idea to commission a portrait to commemorate Harris' election originated at the creative agency BBH New York. The creative team then launched a search for an artist and found Simon Berger, who lives in Switzerland and specializes in glass artistry.

Using a photo of Harris that was taken by New York photographer Celeste Sloman as a guide, Berger lightly hammered on the slab of laminated glass to create the tiny cracks and fissures that together formed Harris' one-of-a-kind likeness.

Berger said he created his first glass portrait in 2016 while experimenting.

"I hit the glass directly with the hammer, so that cracks and impacts occur," he said in an email. "Hard hits create abstraction and I 'paint' with targeted fine hits."

Harris is aware of the project, but it was unclear whether she would go see it.

The project came together quickly after the November election. Working from his studio in Niederönz, Berger took about a day to hammer out the portrait. It was then shipped "very, very carefully" from Switzerland, said Jackie Anzaldi, a creative director at BBH New York.

"We wanted it to really be like a show-stopping piece that people are going to see and interact with and really celebrate her in the way that she should be," said Liz Loudy, another BBH New York creative director who worked on the project.

The portrait will be on public display at the Lincoln Memorial through Saturday night. It will then go to the Chief flagship office in New York, with future plans for public viewing to be determined.

Mysterious **monolith** pops up near Turkish World Heritage site

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish authorities are investigating the appearance of a mysterious monolith in southeastern Turkey.

The metal block was found by a farmer on Friday in Sanliurfa province with old Turkic script that reads "Look at the sky, see the moon." The monolith, 3 meters high (about 10 feet), was discovered near the UNESCO World Heritage site named Gobekli Tepe, which has megalithic structures dating to the 10th millennium B.C., thousands of years before Stonehenge.

Turkish police officers guard a monolith, found on an open field near Sanliurfa, southeastern Turkey, Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021. AP

Turkish media reported Sunday that gendarmes were looking through CCTV footage and investigating vehicles that may have transported the monolith.

Other mysterious monoliths have popped up and some have disappeared in numerous countries in recent months.

Man charged with trespassing after run on Super Bowl field

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—A Florida man who ran onto the field during the Super Bowl has been charged with trespassing.

With the world watching, authorities say Yuri Andrade, 31, scampered onto the field Sunday night in the fourth quarter of the game between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Kansas City Chiefs.

Andrade was wearing shorts and a pink leotard or swimsuit. He was eventually tackled on about the 3-yard-line by security personnel and escorted out of Tampa's Raymond James Stadium.

Hillsborough County jail records show Andrade posted $500 bail and was released early Monday. The records did not indicate if Andrade has an attorney to speak for him.

Security tries to grab a fan on the field during the second half of the NFL Super Bowl 55 football game between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Kansas City Chiefs, Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021, in Tampa, Fla. AP

Tampa TV station WFLA reported that Andrade was planted at the game by social media personality Vitaly Zdorovetskiy. He runs an adult website called Vitaly Uncensored, which was written on the front of Andrade's pink outfit.

The Buccaneers won the game 31-9.

In-home camera systems don't sit well with sitter

DEAR ABBY: I enjoy babysitting for the children of family and friends. But while I have nothing to hide, I hate how everyone seems to have inside cameras. I feel like I'm in a fishbowl, like if I let their kids veg in front of the TV or the computer, I'll be judged as lazy. I also hate having my picture taken, so the idea of being on a live feed all day is off-putting.

Do I ask them to turn off the cameras, or stop babysitting? I can't be the only person who is uncomfortable being monitored all day like a caged animal. What's a good way of handling this?

MONITORED IN OHIO

DEAR MONITORED: People usually have cameras inside their home for security reasons, and so they will have a warning or evidence in case of a break-in. Parents and pet owners enjoy peace of mind knowing they can periodically check to see how their precious angels are doing. The intent is not to spy on you.

If you feel you are being watched excessively, ask the parents how they think you are doing. Unless they complain about your performance, a good way of handling this would be to simply accept the situation, or restrict your babysitting to homes that are camera-free.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have had a crush on a man since we were in our teens. We're now in our mid-40s. Both of us ended long-term relationships about a year ago. We have stayed in contact every now and then, but only as friends -- more like family. He was best friends with my beloved late uncle.

We have decided to meet, with sex at the forefront of our thoughts. How do I prepare myself to go into this with a sex-only mind frame? Do you think this could damage our 30-year friendship?

NERVOUS IN OREGON

DEAR NERVOUS: It has been my observation that men and women view sexual relationships differently. Women often let their emotions get involved. Men can more easily separate the two. It could ABSOLUTELY damage your 30-year friendship if what he expects is a casual friends-with-benefits relationship and at some point you decide you need more from this man you have had a crush on since your teens.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My 25-year-old daughter has stopped talking to me. She said I need counseling to discuss the abuse during her childhood. I asked, "What abuse?" She won't say! I can't think of any. She was never spanked. She was given anything she asked for and allowed to join any club or sport she was interested in.

The only thing she finally mentioned was that my husband and I had arguments. We didn't argue often. I'm at a loss. Should I step back and leave her alone? I send texts and call her once a week. Most go unanswered. When she does answer, she asks if I have started counseling. Please advise.

CUT OFF IN INDIANA

DEAR CUT OFF: Tell your daughter that you are open to counseling, but only if it is joint counseling with her to figure out why there is such a disparity in your—and her—memories of her childhood. If you do, it may—I can't guarantee—resolve what's happening now.

■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

SO WHO IS THIS A JOB FOR?
STUPENDOUS MAN!
WFF! GUH!
SUPER HEROES WEAR SNOW PANTS?
WHEN THERE'S SNOW OUT, THEY DO!
THIS LOOKS LIKE A REAL JOB FOR STUPENDOUS MAN!
WELL OF COURSE THE ZIPPER'S GOING TO GET STUCK IF EVERYONE STANDS AROUND WATCHING ME!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

KATY SAW A COFFEE SPY GO BY THE WINDOW. THEY WANT MY COFFEE-MAKER PLANS.
WAIT. WAIT. WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?
BLACK WOOL CAP. CURLY MUSTACHE. CHIN BEARD.
THAT'S PIERRE. THE METER GUY.
OH. SUUURE!
DID THEY GET TO YOU? THEY GOT TO YOU, DIDN'T THEY!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

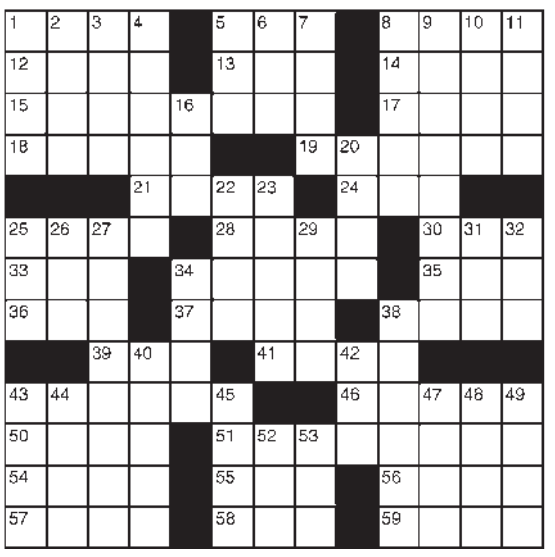
ACROSS
1 Curved lines
5 Zodiac feline
8 Feudal laborer
12 Booty
13 Sphere
14 Despot
15 Coffee bar order
17 Church section
18 Gather wool
19 Redacted
21 Scurry
24 Poem of praise
25 Mellows
28 Sandwich cookie
30 Span. lady
33 — Moines
34 Song of praise
35 Toe count
36 NASCAR sponsor
37 Agts.
38 Actress Fisher
39 Discoverer's call
41 Chess soldier
43 Risky
46 Florida city
50 Go yachting
51 Adopts
54 Diminutive suffix
55 Actress Salonga of "Miss Saigon"
56 Rules (Abbr.)
57 Any time now
58 "Rah!"
59 Highlander

DOWN
1 Pub potables
2 — Hashanah
3 Deal (with)
4 Fancy fiddles
5 — Alamos
6 Triage ctrs.
7 Reed instrument
8 Straitlaced
9 Hurdles for psychics
10 Demolish, in Dover
11 Wilma's hubby
16 Notable time
20 Unhappy destiny
22 American Beauty, e.g.
23 Maria von — ("The Sound of Music" role)
25 Billboards
26 Retrieve
27 Hockey legend Phil
29 "Born Free" lioness
31 Seminary subj.
32 Literary collection
34 Campus VIP
38 Acquires, as debts
40 Van — ("Jump" band)
42 Romance
43 Exploits
44 Peacekeeping org.
45 Slithery
47 In — (shortly)
48 Toy block name
49 Admin. aide
52 Salty expanse
53 Salary

Solution time: 23 mins.

F	E	I	A	■	A	P	H	■	I	E	S	H
O	R	A	N	■	C	I	A	■	E	C	T	O
P	A	R	¯	Y	H	A	T	■	M	R	I	S
■	■	■	O	R	E	■	I	M	P	U	R	E
S	W	A	N	S	■	T	O	M	E	■	■	■
N	A	R	Y	■	P	I	N	C	H	H	I	T
A	C	L	■	P	E	T	A	L	■	A	S	A
P	O	C	L	H	A	_	L	■	B	I	N	D
■	■	■	L	A	C	E	■	A	O	R	T	A
N	A	M	A	T	H	■	I	S	O	■	■	■
O	R	C	M	■	P	A	C	K	H	E	A	T
M	E	S	A	■	I	M	O	■	O	I	N	K
S	A	S	S	■	E	O	N	■	O	N	T	O

Yesterday's answer 2-10



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chloe Grace Moretz, 24; Karen Fukuhara, 29; Emma Roberts, 30; Elizabeth Banks, 47.

Happy Birthday: You'll be able to take on whatever comes your way. Your discipline and diligence will draw attention that gives you a platform to bring about change. Stand tall, be a good listener and know when to say no. It's time to be a leader and focus on what you want to accomplish. Turn 2021 into a stellar year while following your dreams. Your numbers are 5, 12, 21, 29, 34, 43, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Express your ideas, accept criticism and make adjustments. Progress is the intent, and using your mind, body and emotional drive to get you to your destination will seal the deal. Strive for perfection, and don't look back. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Think twice before you upset someone you love. Choose your words carefully, and you'll avoid ending up in a precarious position that might affect your reputation, status or situation. Take care of your responsibilities; say less and do more. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You can get ahead if you take the right measures. Check online job postings, set up an interview, send out your resume or discuss your ideas and plans with someone who can help you make your dreams come true. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Try something new and exciting or revisit a hobby or pastime you used to enjoy. Taking a unique approach to how you live and how you respond to others will encourage better relationships. Learn from an experience, and protect your assets. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* You'll feel ill at ease around a partner, colleague or peer. Be prepared to offset anyone who tries to make you look bad. Take care of your responsibilities and maintain a positive attitude; you will outshine anyone who challenges you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Put your energy into educational pursuits, research and discovery. Ask questions, verify information and consider how best to turn something you love to do into a profitable pastime. Refuse to let a peer, friend or relative goad you into a debate. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Put your plan in motion. You've got what it takes to push your way to the top if you are mindful of others, optimistic in your pursuits and fastidious in the way you present your objective. A romantic gesture will boost your ego. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Hold off on making a change that you aren't fully prepared to put in play. Rethink your strategy, and you'll come up with a unique idea that will help offset a falling out with someone you value. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Do your own thing. You will reach your objective if you don't let anyone interfere with your plans. Positive changes to the way you handle money, approach work and take care of yourself will pay off. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A unique twist to how you do things will give you a new lease on life. Move items around at home to free up space for a project you want to pursue. Don't argue with someone who never agrees with you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* You can't please everyone, but you can make a difference. Follow your instincts, make decisions based on facts and pursue your goals with gusto. Personal accomplishments will encourage those you love to follow suit. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Be careful what you share and who you trust. Focus on getting things done, not trying to convince others to help you. What you accomplish on your own will be gratifying and encourage you to achieve something else on your to-do list. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, persistent and unpredictable. You are intense and trendy.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

						4	5	
					1	7	9	8
					7	6	1		2
				2	5		3	8	1
7	2	8	1					
2		6	3					
5			7					
1	8	9	6					

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	5	2	7	9	4	6	3	1
7	9	1	8	3	6	2	5	4
6	4	3	5	2	1	7	9	8
5	1	4	9	8	7	3	6	2
9	2	7	1	6	3	8	4	5
3	8	6	2	4	5	9	1	7
4	3	5	6	7	2	1	8	9
1	7	8	3	5	9	4	2	6
2	6	9	4	1	8	5	7	3

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

FOUNDATION Solution: 8 letters

D	A	C	P	U	E	K	A	M	D	A	R	K	T	R
E	I	S	E	Y	E	O	A	I	C	O	L	O	R	E
N	R	C	T	E	M	E	U	S	D	I	N	U	Z	Z
N	B	D	A	R	R	Q	M	E	O	E	F	N	I	I
A	R	E	A	C	I	F	T	M	T	L	O	T	N	R
T	U	W	D	L	I	N	A	T	U	R	A	L	C	U
W	S	Y	A	A	I	N	G	S	B	I	S	E	O	T
R	H	E	L	T	H	G	O	E	E	C	D	M	O	S
I	E	I	N	P	E	S	H	R	N	H	A	E	L	I
N	S	G	P	I	P	R	P	T	U	T	E	C	M	O
K	R	Ⓔ	N	P	L	A	K	O	T	L	B	A	I	M
L	A	E	Ⓖ	I	E	B	C	E	N	O	A	F	C	A
E	C	E	Y	Ⓐ	F	D	I	T	I	G	P	Y	A	T
S	S	E	S	A	B	C	T	A	C	N	E	S	H	C
E	N	O	C	I	L	I	S	E	T	A	R	D	Y	H

© 2021 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 2/10

Acne, Age, Airbrush, Apply, Astringent, Base, Beads, Beige, Bronze, Color, Cool, Cream, Dark, Dewy, Eyes, Face, Finger, Free, Hyaluronic Acid, Hydrate, Layer, Light, Lines, Liquid, Makeup, Match, Matte, Medium, Melt, Mica, Moisturizer, Natural, Oil, Rich, Scars, Shade, Silicone, Sponge, Spot, Stick, Sulfur, Tanned, Tinted, Tone, Tube, Warm, Water, Whipped, Wrinkles, Zinc

Yesterday's Answer: Smile

Treasuries 24 through 42 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Bucks top Nuggets in Giannis-Jokic showdown

AP
Denver Nuggets' Nikola Jokic takes a shot against Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo in the first half of an NBA game Monday, Feb. 8, 2021, in Denver.

DENVER (AP)— Khris Middleton had 29 points and a career-high 12 assists, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 30 points and the Milwaukee Bucks won their fifth straight game by beating the Denver Nuggets 125-112 on Monday night.

Middleton's 12th assist was a thing of beauty — a pinpoint pass to Antetokounmpo for a dunk with 1:39 remaining to give the Bucks a 120-110 lead.

Bryn Forbes had 15 points for the Bucks, who earned a rare win in the Mile High City. Milwaukee improved to 10-40 all-time at Denver.

Nikola Jokic finished with 35 points and 12 rebounds in a showdown with Antetokounmpo. Jokic couldn't quite replicate his shooting touch from the other night when he scored a career-high 50 points at Sacramento.

Will Barton added a season-high 24 points as the Nuggets dropped their third straight.

Lakers 119, Thunder 112, OT

In Los Angeles, LeBron James had 28 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists for his third triple-double of the season, and the Lakers beat Oklahoma City to win their fifth in a row.

It was their second straight overtime win after beating Detroit in two overtimes on Saturday. The Lakers tied their longest winning streak of the season despite being without Anthony Davis, who sat out with right Achilles tendinosis.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander narrowly missed matching James' triple-double. He finished with 29 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds. Darius Bazley added 21 points and a career-high 16 rebounds. Hamidou Diallo had 20 points and tied his career high with 11 rebounds.

Spurs 105, Warriors 100

In San Antonio, Dejounte Murray had 27 points, 10 rebounds and eight steals, and DeMar DeRozan added 21 points and 10 assists as the Spurs beat Golden State.

Stephen Curry scored 32 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 24 for the Warriors, who were without injured centers James Wiseman and Kevon Looney. Draymond Green had 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

Murray hit a step-back 3-pointer with 12.6 seconds remaining that gave the Spurs a 101-97 lead. Curry responded with his own fall-away 3, but DeRozan closed out the game by making four straight free throws.

Hornets 119, Rockets 94

In Charlotte, LaMelo Ball made a career-high seven 3-pointers and finished with 24 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds as Charlotte defeated short-handed Houston.

Miles Bridges had another strong outing with 19 points and 10 rebounds, and Gordon Hayward added 19 points for the Hornets, who opened the fourth quarter on a 19-1 run to break open a tight game.

Victor Oladipo had 21 points to lead the Rockets, who lost for only the third time in 10 games.

Houston played without three of its top four scorers— John Wall, Eric Gordon and Christian Wood. Gordon and Wall were given a night of rest, while Wood missed his second straight game with a sprained ankle.

Raptors 128, Grizzlies 113

In Memphis, Fred VanVleet and Pascal Siakam each scored 32 points and Toronto put together a second-half rally to beat the Grizzlies.

Norman Powell added 29 points for the Raptors, who began their comeback after coach Nick Nurse was ejected in the third quarter. VanVleet also had nine assists for Toronto, which outscored Memphis 65-43 in the second half — including 34-16 in the fourth quarter.

Jonas Valanciunas led the Grizzlies with 27 points and a season-high 20 rebounds. Ja Morant had 18 points and nine assists but was only 5 of 17 from the field as Memphis shot 43%.

Mavericks 127, Timberwolves 122

In Dallas, Kristaps Porzingis had 27 points, 13 rebounds and six blocks, Luka Doncic scored 26 points and the Mavericks held off Minnesota.

Tim Hardaway added 24 points off the bench as the Mavericks won their second straight at home after a six-game skid at the American Airlines Center. They led by 25 in the second quarter before the Timberwolves pulled to 123-120 with 50 seconds left.

Josh Richardson hit a jumper with 27 seconds to go for a five-point lead and Malik Beasley missed a 3-pointer seconds later.

Wizards 105, Bulls 101

In Chicago, Bradley Beal scored 35 points and Washington held on for a rare win, beating the Bulls.

Beal, the NBA's leading scorer, hit three free throws in the final 9.8 seconds. Rui Hachimura added 19 points and a season-high 10 rebounds on his 23rd birthday, and the Wizards improved to 6-15 despite resting Russell Westbrook.

Zach LaVine had 35 points but missed a potential tying layup that was contested in the closing seconds.

Suns 119, Cavaliers 113

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored a season-high 36 points, Mikal Bridges added 22 and Phoenix rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the Cavaliers.

The Suns have won six of seven while the Cavaliers have dropped four straight. Booker made 14 of 27 shots, including five 3-pointers.

Phoenix took a 101-100 lead with seven minutes left on a 3 from Cam Johnson. The second-year forward had missed his first six attempts from beyond the arc.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	17	7	.708	0.0
Brooklyn	14	11	.560	3.5
Boston	12	10	.545	4.0
Toronto	11	13	.458	6.0
New York	11	14	.440	6.5
Central				
Milwaukee	16	8	.667	0.0
Indiana	12	12	.500	4.0
Cleveland	10	15	.400	6.5
Chicago	9	14	.391	6.5
Detroit	5	18	.217	10.5
Southeast				
Charlotte	12	13	.480	0.0
Atlanta	11	12	.478	0.0
Miami	9	14	.391	2.0
Orlando	9	15	.375	2.5
Washington	6	15	.286	4.0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Lakers	19	6	.760	0.0
LA Clippers	17	8	.680	2.0
Phoenix	14	9	.609	4.0
Sacramento	12	11	.522	6.0
Golden State	12	12	.500	6.5
Southwest				
San Antonio	14	10	.583	0.0
Houston	11	12	.478	2.5
Memphis	9	10	.474	2.5
New Orleans	10	12	.455	3.0
Dallas	11	14	.440	3.5
Northwest				
Utah	19	5	.792	0.0
Portland	12	10	.545	6.0
Denver	12	11	.522	6.5
Oklahoma City	10	13	.435	8.5
Minnesota	6	18	.250	13.0

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ohtani, Angels agree on $8.5 million, 2-year contract

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)— The Los Angeles Angels are far from finished with their effort to unlock Shohei Ohtani's enormous two-way potential.

Ohtani agreed to an $8.5 million, two-year contract with the Angels on Monday, avoiding arbitration. He will make $3 million in 2021 and $5.5 million in 2022, and both years are guaranteed.

Ohtani had asked for $3.3 million for the upcoming season, and the Angels had countered with $2.5 million. Instead of going to what would have been a difficult, complicated arbitration hearing because of Ohtani's two-way talents and the pandemic-shortened season, the sides reached a deal that extends up to his final year of arbitration eligibility in 2023.

"Obviously it's a unique case," new Los Angeles general manager Perry Minasian said. "There aren't any examples of this. But as we talked, we felt this number lined up over a two-year deal. There's risk and reward for both sides, but it made sense for them and it made sense for us. We're ecstatic we could get a deal done."

Although the Japanese star is coming off a rough season at the plate and on the mound, the Angels remain committed to Ohtani's potential at both positions. Minasian said he fully expects Ohtani to be a two-way player again this season.

"I think he's feeling great," Minasian said. "He's ready to go. Mentally, physically, he's definitely put in the work, and what's pretty impressive is the amount of time and energy this guy puts into his craft. When you combine that with the talent, we feel like he's going to be a huge part of this club and help us win multiple games in multiple ways. We believe he's a difference-maker."

Ohtani earned $259,259 in prorated pay from his $700,000 contract in 2020, but the 2018 AL Rookie of the Year struggled in his return from Tommy John surgery to double duty after serving exclusively as a designated hitter in 2019.

Ohtani batted .190 with seven homers and 24 RBIs in 175 plate appearances as the Angels' DH, his numbers declining sharply from his first two seasons in the majors.

7-inning doubleheaders, runners on 2nd in extras

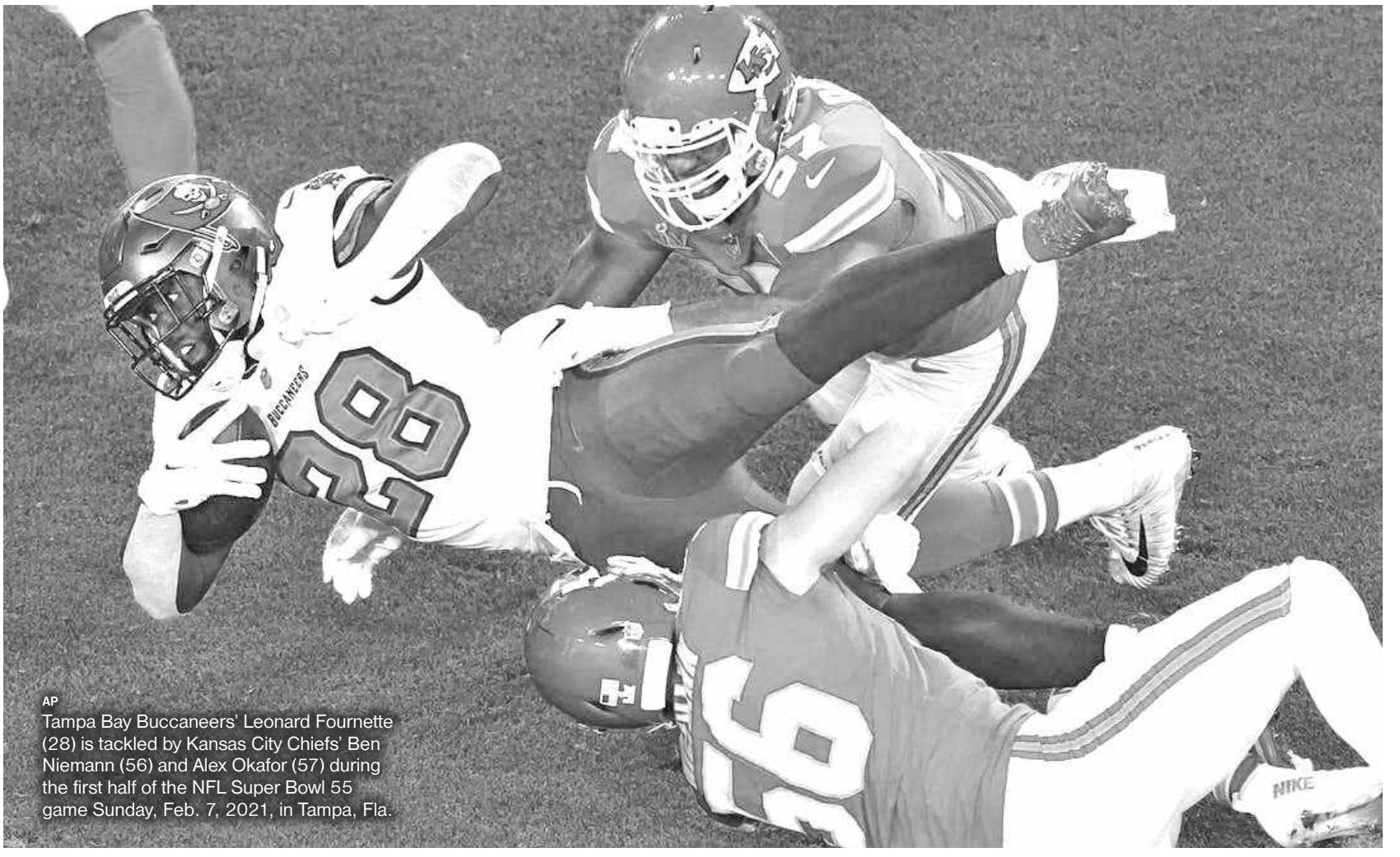
Meanwhile, the Seven-inning doubleheaders and runners on second base to start extra innings will return for a second straight season under an agreement for 2021 health protocols reached Monday between the MLB and the players' association.

The deal did not include last year's experimental rule to extend the designated hitter to the National League or expanded playoffs. After allowing 16 teams in the postseason last year instead of 10, MLB had proposed 14 for this year before withdrawing that plan last month.

Last year's expanded playoffs agreement did not come together until hours before the season's first pitch.

There were 78 extra-inning games last year, and the longest by innings were a pair of 13-inning contests at Houston, won by the Los Angeles Dodgers on July 29 and by Oakland on Aug. 7. Every previous season since 1901 had at least one game of 15 innings or longer.

Bucs hope to keep core to chase another Super Bowl



AP
Tampa Bay Buccaneers' Leonard Fournette (28) is tackled by Kansas City Chiefs' Ben Niemann (56) and Alex Okafor (57) during the first half of the NFL Super Bowl 55 game Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021, in Tampa, Fla.

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Tom Brady's coming back. So is Bruce Arians.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are already thinking about what it'll take to repeat as Super Bowl champions. The challenge begins with trying to keep some key components together for next season.

Brady threw three touchdowns passes on the way to claiming a record seventh NFL title with a 31-9 rout of the Kansas City Chiefs—two to Rob Gronkowski and one to Antonio Brown, both of whom played on one-year deals after being lured to Tampa Bay by the 43-year-old quarterback.

Leonard Fournette ran for the team's other TD. He, too, joined the Bucs on a one-year contract after Brady reached out to the talented running back after he was released by the Jacksonville Jaguars late in training camp.

If Brady, Arians and general manager Jason Licht have their way, Gronkowski, Brown and Fournette won't wind up being one-season rentals.

The team is also interested in signing linebacker Shaquil Barrett and receiver Chris Godwin to long-term deals. Defensive starters Lavonte David and Ndamukong Suh can become free agents, although there's been no indication either of them is eager to leave.

"I'm very very confident," Arians said Monday of keeping the bulk of the roster together for next season. "I have all the trust in the world in Jason and what he will do. There will be dollars involved, but I think this group is so so close that sometimes dollars don't matter. But we're going to do everything we can to get the dollars right, too."

The Bucs likely have about $38 million in salary cap space, though the 2021 cap number has not been set yet.

Arians also expressed the belief that the Bucs, who rode Brady and a dynamic young defense on an impressive playoff surge that culminated with Tampa Bay becoming the first team to appear in a Super Bowl in its own stadium, can be even better next year.

He and Brady reiterated how difficult it was to navigate this season, the quarterback's first in Tampa Bay after 20 years in New England, amid COVID-19 protocols that eliminated offseason workouts and preseason games.

"Hopefully we can keep the band together, have an offseason and actually know what we're doing (entering next season)," Arians said. "I think the sky's the limit for this group.

Brady, who won his fifth Super Bowl MVP award, was asked Sunday night and again Monday where his first title with Tampa Bay ranks with the six he won with the Patriots. He said every season is different and poses different challenges, though he finally conceded there was something special about what the Bucs were able to accomplish playing through a pandemic.

"It's great. That's where I rank it. It's been a great year, incredibly fun. I think in a unique way it was kind of like, with the coronavirus situation and all the protocols, it really was like football for junkies. There was not really a lot of other things to do other than show up to work and play football," Brady said.

"If you love football this was the year to be a player in the NFL because that's all it was," Brady added. "It was football camp with all your buddies year round. I really enjoyed that part."

Maskless fans

So much for the mayor's order requiring masks at Super Bowl parties. Videos went viral on social media, showing throngs of mostly maskless fans and packed sports bars as the clock inside Raymond James Stadium ticked down on a hometown Super Bowl win for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

"It is a little frustrating because we have worked so hard," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said during an early Monday morning news conference with the Super Bowl Host Committee. "At this point in dealing with COVID-19, there is a level of frustration when you see that."

Some 200,000 masks were handed out ahead of the game, and "a majority" of people and businesses followed the rules, she said.

Hours later, during another news conference, Castor's remarks shifted, saying that at least among those people that she saw celebrating, most of them were masked.

"I'm proud to say the majority of individuals that I saw out and about enjoying the festivities associated with the Super Bowl were complying," she said. "They understood their level of personal responsibility and they were doing the right thing. I'm very proud of that."

Even the White House weighed in.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki was asked about whether President Joe Biden was concerned over Tampa fans taking to the streets following the Buccaneers Super Bowl.

"He is of course concerned when there are pictures and photos—we all are—that show many, many people without masks in close distance with one another at the height of a pandemic," she said.

Tokyo Olympics have yet another problem: Mori

TOKYO (AP)—The postponed Tokyo Olympics have yet another problem besides the pandemic. This time it's Yoshiro Mori, the president of the local organizing committee.

Mori made derogatory comments about women almost a week ago in a meeting of the Japanese Olympic Committee. Basically, he said they talk too much, driven by a "strong sense of rivalry."

The 83-year-old former prime minister was forced to apologize, but this has not quelled calls for his resignation. They seem to grow daily, cutting into weakening support for the Olympics and raising questions why elderly men dominate politics and boardrooms in Japan.

In a statement on Sunday, the local organizing committee issued a vague statement saying it supports diversity. The committee is also heavily dominated by men with few women in any leadership roles.

Mori has been the continuing topic of talk and news shows, which point out that the World Economic Forum ranks Japan 121st of 153 countries in gender equality. This contrasts with Japan's image as a sophisticated, developed country and the home of some of the world's most famous and trusted brands.

Mori's future could come to a head in a matter of days with reports local sponsors are upset. They have contributed a record $3.5 billion to the Tokyo Games.

Widely circulated reports in Japan say the organizing committee's executives will meet this week to discuss his fate.

The fallout is reaching the upper rungs of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Toshihiro Nikai, the 81-year-old general secretary of the party, criticized several hundred games' volunteers who said they are dropping out as protest.

"If they do want to quit no matter what, we have to recruit additional volunteers," Nikai said on Monday.

Nikai was challenged by Taro Aso, the 80-year-old deputy prime minister and a former prime minister, himself. Aso is also a former Olympian and said Nikai showed a "lack of respect" for the volunteers.

All the disruption could further soil Tokyo's image as it tries to pull off the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic, saddled with soaring costs that are now officially $15.4 billion but believed to be much higher.

The Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee quickly accepted Mori's apology. He was appointed under former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has been backed by current Prime Minister Suga, and has built strong ties with IOC President Thomas Bach.

Bach has called Tokyo the "best prepared Olympics in history" and has repeated the compliment even as it tries to hold the most difficult games on record.

The IOC needs the Olympics to take place. Almost 75% of its income is from selling broadcast rights. Unlike other sports businesses, it has only two major events to sell — the Summer and Winter Olympics.

Tokyo and the IOC plan to welcome 15,400 Olympic and Paralympic athletes in just under six months, keep them in a "bubble," and limit their contact with media, fans, judges and officials.

An on-line petition was reported Monday to have gained 140,000 signatures. It does not ask for Mori's resignation, but asks officials to address his behavior.

The Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that its weekend poll showed almost 60% believe Mori is not qualified for the job. He has headed the organizing committee since 2014.

The Olympics are scheduled to open on July 23 but polls show about 80% of the Japanese public believe they should be canceled or postponed again. The IOC has said they will be canceled if they cannot be held this time.

In a radio interview on Sunday during the Super Bowl, U.S. President Joe Biden said he hoped the Olympics would take place for the good of the athletes.

"I've spoken with the prime minister of Japan, he's working very hard to be in a position to safely open the games, to have the games, and I think that has to be based on science, whether or not it is safe for that to occur," Biden said.

Djokovic, Nadal ease past opponents

MELBOURNE (AP)—It's been so long since he had a sizeable crowd to play for, the showman in Novak Djokovic just had to come out.

Top-ranked Djokovic began his Australian Open title defense with a clinical, 6-3, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Jeremy Chardy in the closing act of the day 1 program on Rod Laver Arena.

"Makes my heart full to see the crowd in the stadium again," Djokovic said in post-match interview at the 15,000-seat arena, which was about one-third full. "This is the most people I've seen on the tennis court in 12 months. I really … I really, really appreciate your support in coming out tonight."

He bristled at the suggestion that he'd been frustrated during quarantine, focusing again on the fans.

"I'm just really glad we are free. We're playing tennis," he said. "I'm really glad we're back in Australia. It's a happy place for us. Happy Slam."

The total crowd Monday at Melbourne Park was 17,922, including day and night sessions in three zones separated to enhance social-distancing measures. It was well down on the 64,387 fans that crammed onto the grounds on Day 1 of last year's Australian Open, but way more than any other major since then.

While Djokovic spoke of his "love affair" with the main show court, where he has won eight Australian titles, Kyrgios was closing the day's program out on the third arena stadium—where polite applause is always secondary to whoops and whistles—with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 win over Frederico Silva.

After his first Grand Slam match in a year, Kyrgios told the crowd "it felt normal, to be honest, you guys were going nuts. It was good to see. Let's hope we can continue it."

There's no love lost between Djokovic and Kyrgios, who have been trading verbal barbs for months and added to them this week.

Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal defied his gloomy injury prognosis and complete lack of match practice to crush Laslo Djere, 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

The Spanish great had pulled out of his nation's ATP Cup campaign with a back problem and was bordering on mournful on the eve on the Grand Slam when he said the injury was still affecting him.

Yet he was close to his all-action, fist-pumping best as he bounced around a sun-bathed Rod Laver Arena in the final set against Djere and painted the lines with trademark topspin bombs.

AP
Rafael Nadal of Spain returns the ball to Serbia's Laslo Djere during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

"It's been a tough 15 days for me," said Nadal. "I needed to survive today so that's what I did.

"I'm still alive and that's the main thing."

Second seed Nadal said his back was still bothering him against the world No. 56 Djere, the Spaniard's first match since losing in the semifinals of the ATP Finals in November.

"Today it's not great. I needed to change a little bit the motion of my serve. That's what I tried to survive that condition today," said the 34-year-old.

"I need to go day-to-day and just try to stay positive."

Kenin survives scare

Sofia Kenin faced an unexpected early challenge to open her title defense.

The No. 4 seed American was broken in the fourth game of her opening match and found herself in a 3-1 hole to Australian Maddison Inglis.

Inglis turned her 3-1 edge in the first set into a 5-4 advantage before Kenin rallied for a 7-5 win.

Inglis made Kenin work for the second set as well, but the reigning WTA Player of the Year prevailed to advance to the second round, 7-5, 6-4.

In other results, Coco Gauff had no issue getting out of the first round on Tuesday.

Gauff cruised past Switzerland's Jil Teichmann in straight sets 6-3, 6-2. The 16-year-old needed just 56 minutes to grab the win at John Cain Arena, too, picking up her second win in two weeks over Teichmann. Gauff finished the day with eight aces, and converted all three of her break points.

Gauff will take on No. 5 Elina Svitolina, who won her match against the Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova in straight sets, 6-3, 7-6 (5).

MHS 1

From Page 24

day's final set of preliminary matches allowed GCA 1 to take one of the Top 4 seedings in the playoffs. The Lady Eagles' three victories were against MHS 4 on Court 2, 21-6; MHS 3 on Court 3, 21-9; and MHS 2 on Court 4, 22-20.

Other results on Court 4 had SIS 1 topping MHS 2, 21-15, SIS 2, 21-14, and MHS 4, 21-8, and MHS 3 outclassing MHS 3, 21-11. On Court 3, GCA 2 won over MHS 3, 21-9, SIS 1, 21-13, and MCS 1, 21-9; and MCS 1 prevailed over MHS 3, 21-16, and MCS 2, 21-10.

On Court 2, GCA 2 routed MCS 2, 21-3; SIS 2 also eased past MCS 2, 21-7; MHS 4 defeated MCS 2, too 21-13; MHS 2 handed MCS 2 another beating, 21-12; and MCS 1 edged SIS 1, 21-14.

Meanwhile, in the lone makeup game played last Saturday, MHS 3 won over SIS 2, 21-15.

With the girls division completing the preliminary matches, the 10 teams in the boys field will take the courts this weekend to determine the seeding for the playoffs.

MCS 1 leads the boys division with its 6-0 record and is followed by MHS 1 (4-1), GCA (3-1), MCS 2 (3-2), SIS 2 (3-2), MHS 2 (2-4), SIS 1 (1-3), MHS 3 (1-3), Agape Christian School 1 (1-4), and Agape 2 (0-4).

Marianas Cup Weightlifting Championships set for March 27

CNMI Weightlifting is preparing for the second Marianas Cup Weightlifting Championships scheduled for March 27 at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe.

The competitor entry fee is $5 for CNMI Weightlifting members and $20 for non-members.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, next month's competition will be the first locally organized weightlifting event since the inaugural Northern Marianas Cup held in February 2020.

Last year's event saw 15 men and two women compete for 14 medals in seven weight classes. CNMI Weightlifting is anticipating an even larger field this year, according to its president John Davis.

Entry forms for the Marianas Cup 2021 can be picked up at the Latte Built Fitness Center in Susupe and Gold's Gym in Garapan. Entry forms and fees must be submitted no later than Feb. 26. Weigh-in is scheduled to begin at 9am at the event venue, while the competition will start at 10am.

The public is reminded that all safety measures and directives set by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force will be in implemented.

For further information, contact Davis at 789-9211 or cnmiweightlifting@gmail.com or Antonette Labausa at 285-2286. ***(PR)***

TSUNAMI

From Page 24

by such youthful energy. All of the students were very attentive and enthusiastic. They were able to follow the movements quite well, despite all of us wearing masks. When you teach a class where all of the students are extremely fit, it is easy to move them into slightly more difficult postures," Bradley said.

The yoga instructor added that yoga gives competitive athletes like swimmers the opportunity to take of the usual pressures they feel from competitions and rigorous training sessions.

"Yoga's main benefit is a chance to dial it down a bit, let the practice be more about the breathing, stretching, and relaxing. Learning to use the breath to calm yourself and for a little while let go of the competition aspect," she said.

Meanwhile, Tsunami Saipan head coach Hiro Kimura said the club will have more sessions with Bradley as they continue to train for future competitions and improve the swimmers' skills.

"We hope to focus on improving their posture, concentration, and team spirit and learn effective ways to recover from fatigue in the next yoga classes," Kimura said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Yoga instructor Leslie Bradley, standing third left, poses with Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan members after their session last weekend.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Juhn Tenorio, right, follows the stretching technique shown by Leslie Bradley.

Bucks top Nuggets in Giannis-Jokic showdown

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Bucs hope to keep core to chase another Super Bowl

PAGE 22

MHS 1 sweeps prelims

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Marianas High School 1 earned a perfect record in the preliminary round of the girls division competition in the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic 4v4 Beach Volleyball League after getting five more wins last Saturday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sand courts.

The Lady Dolphins finished the prelims with a 9-0 record to top the team standings and take the No. 1 seeding in the double-elimination playoff round that will be held on Feb. 19 and 20.

MHS 1, which has Fatima Monterubio, Aiko and Nichko Rasiang, Madeleen Narciso, and Nathanette Blas on its roster, bagged four victories on Court 1 and got one on Court 4 to post an unblemished record. The Lady Dolphins downed Mt. Carmel School 2, 21-9, in their first match last weekend, and then defeated MCS 1 and Saipan International School 1 in similar scores, 21-14, and MHS 3, 21-12. For its last game, MHS 1 was pitted against Grace Christian Academy 1 and the former won, 21-10.

Joining MHS 1 in the Top 4 seeding for next weekend's playoff round are GCA 2 (8-2), SIS 1 (7-2), and GCA 1 (6-3). Rota and Tinian did not compete in the preliminary round and automatically took the No. 5 and 6 seeding, respectively, while MHS 2 (6-3) is seeded No. 7 and is followed by MCS 1 (4-5), SIS 2 (3-6), MHS 3 (2-7), MHS 4 (1-8), and MCS 2 (1-8).

MHS 1, GCA 1 and 2, and SIS 1 will get a bye in the first round of the playoffs, while the eight other squads will play in the opening matches next weekend. MCS 1 will face SIS 2 with the winner battling MHS 1; MHS 2 will challenge MHS 3 for the right to duel GCA 2; Tinian will take on MHS 4 with the victor colliding against SIS 1; and Rota will square off against MCS 2 for a chance to meet GCA 1.

Three wins in last Satur-

See MHS 1 on Page 23

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Grace Christian Academy 2's Katriel Saures sets up a teammate during their preliminary game against Marianas High School 1 in the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic 4v4 Beach Volleyball League last month at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sand courts.

Tsunami Saipan swimmers try yoga in training

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan members do balancing drills during a yoga session last weekend.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan members participated in a yoga class last Saturday as part of their cross training.

Twelve Tsunami Saipan swimmers had a session with yoga instructor Leslie Bradley and they learned additional breathing and movement techniques that could help them improve their performance in the water.

"The yoga class was very helpful for us swimmers because we were taught how to breathe more efficiently, maintain strength in balancing, and keep a focused and relaxed mindset. All of those things were undoubtedly helpful in improving my swimming skills," Andrew Nunez said.

Joining Nunez in the yoga class were Juhn Tenorio, Kevin Guererro, Kean Pajarillaga, Isaiah Aleksenko, Kouki Watanabe, Asaka and Shoko Litulumar, Ayumi Obligacion, Michelle Chen, Julia Jinang, and Maria Batallones.

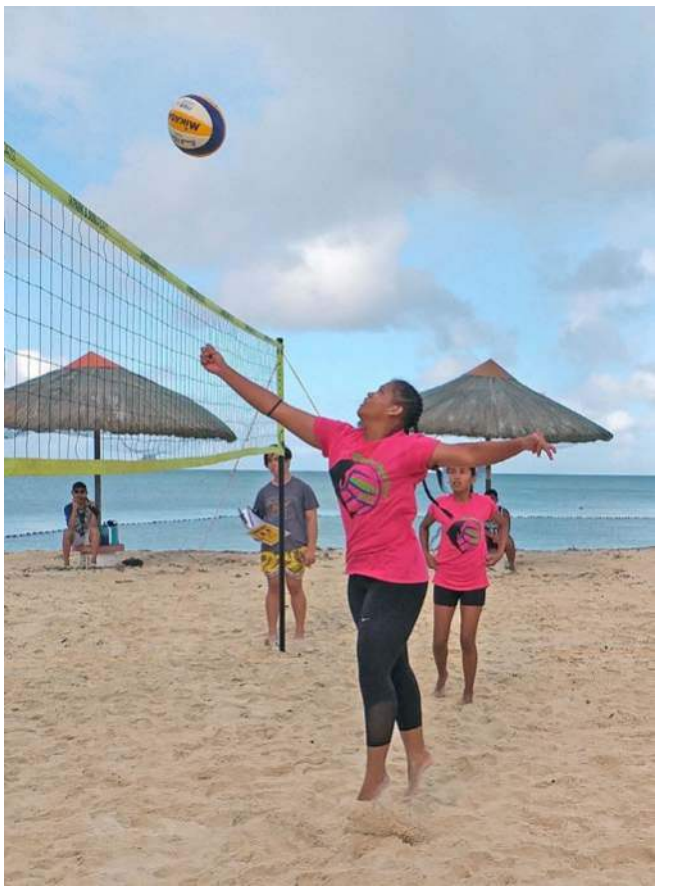
Asaka took note of the stretching techniques they learned from Bradley, saying that they helped her improve her balance, strength, and flexibility, while Jinang liked how the yoga class made them relax.

"The yoga class was calming, helpful, and overall fun. My team and I learned many techniques, from postures to stretches to breathing. This class helped me stretch my body more and acknowledge its limits all the while keeping a calm composure," the 14-year-old Jinang said.

Meanwhile, Bradley was pleased with the response of Tsunami Saipan swimmers during their session.

"I enjoyed the class. It was great to be surrounded

See TSUNAMI on Page 23



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
A Marianas High School 1 player dinks the ball.